DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE *TRANSITION COORDINATORS SURVEY*

By

Diana K. Björkman Wade

B.S., University of Central Florida, 2001

M.A., The George Washington University, 2007

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Dissertation Committee:

_____
Mary E. Morningstar, Ph.D.
Chairperson

_____
Bruce Frey, Ph.D.

_____
Jennifer Ng, Ph.D.

_____
Amy Gaumer Erickson, Ph.D.

_____
Jennifer Kurth, Ph.D.

Date Defended: _____

The Dissertation Committee for Diana K. Björkman Wade
certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

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_____
Mary E. Morningstar, Ph.D.
Chairperson

Date approved: _____

Development and Validation of the *Transition Coordinators Survey* (TCS)

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to create a valid and reliable instrument for the field of secondary special education and transition by developing and validating the *Transition Coordinators Survey* (TCS). Transition coordinators are professionals who are typically responsible for working with students with disabilities, their families, and the community in order to ensure a smooth and effective transition into adult life. There has not been a tool in the field of transition that is intended to measure transition coordinator competencies, and the TCS was designed to specifically target this group of professionals. More than 30 articles were identified and reviewed for use in the study, with publication dates ranging from 1995 to 2011. Transition coordinators from 48 states and 5 U.S. territories participated in the study, yielding a usable sample of 1,346 respondents. The research described here combines descriptive, scaling, and statistical procedures to report that the TCS is a valid and reliable instrument.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, Nico. You have completely changed my life and will forever be my "mini me." Thank you for letting me be your mama. Happy 2nd Birthday!

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Although recent legislation has helped the disability community take strides forward, a gap still exists between the postschool performance of students with disabilities and those without disabilities (Dunn, 1996; National Organization on Disability, 2010; Newman et al., 2009). The National Organization on Disability's 2010 survey of Americans with disabilities found that 21% of people with disabilities are employed full or part-time, compared with 59% of people without disabilities. Students with disabilities are more likely than their nondisabled peers to experience lower pay, job dissatisfaction, and unemployment or underemployment (Wagner, Cameto, & Newman, 2003). Perhaps the most important piece of legislation to assist students with disabilities with the transition into adult life is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA, 2004), which provides clear guidance of the transition services to which each student is entitled. In short, IDEIA 2004 defines transition as a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is results-oriented and focused on improving their achievement to facilitate moving the student from school to postschool activities (IDEIA, 2004; 20 U.S.C. 1401(34)). These postschool activities include "post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation (IDEIA, 2004; 20 U.S.C. 1401(34))".

We know that no single agency can meet the needs of all students in every area of transition (Chadsey-Rusch & Rusch, 1996). As Sitlington and Clark (2006) point out, a major barrier to students receiving coordinated and effective services is the fragmentation and inadequacy of those services and programs. With this knowledge, the importance of

collaboration among schools, communities, families, and students being an integral element of transition (Oertle & Trach, 2007) becomes an even higher priority. The school professional typically responsible for coordinating this collaboration is called the *transition coordinator* (also known as *transition specialist*). Transition coordinators play a key role in whether students with disabilities will be prepared for success after school; however, they do not typically provide direct services to students (Blalock et al., 2003; Morningstar & Benitez, 2013). Transition coordinators may be located in a high school, but they are often involved throughout a school district and the community. They may teach a transition course at the high school; meet with middle school teachers to plan career awareness for students; set up community job placements for students; or attend meetings with other community agencies. Given that the main functions of their jobs differ from secondary special education teachers and other school personnel, they are required to possess a different set of knowledge and skills (Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, 2009).

Need for the Study

The need for the *Transition Coordinators Survey* (TCS) arises from a gap in the understanding of what role transition coordinators are expected to play in schools, as well as what they actually do. They are assumed to maintain a specific set of knowledge and skills as described in documents such as The Council for Exceptional Children's *What Every Special Educator Must Know* (2009) and the Division on Career Development and Transition's *Transition Specialist Competencies* (2000), yet the field does not have a valid and reliable instrument to assess whether these competencies are being met or to determine whether specific standards are realistic. The term *transition competencies* refers to knowledge and skill areas for which a proficient transition coordinator should have command.

The *Secondary Teachers Transition Survey* (STTS), a self-rating scale for transition-related education and services, was developed for secondary special education teachers (Benitez & Morningstar, 2005), and transition coordinators who have completed the STTS have indicated that it does not adequately reflect their daily job duties (Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, 2009). Whereas secondary special education teachers are directly teaching students throughout the school day, transition coordinators do not typically provide direct services to students, but rather work outside the classroom to coordinate a student's transition to adulthood. By designing and developing a competency survey that will more adequately fit the daily job duties and position requirements of a transition coordinator, further research will be enhanced that can inform the field of the efficacy of transition coordinators (Morningstar, 2010).

It is important to find out exactly what transition coordinators do to facilitate a successful transition for students with disabilities, particularly regarding how they can be more effective in assisting teachers, agencies, students, and families. Knowing what tasks are performed, techniques used, and models followed is important because these major components of secondary special education and transition directly impact a student's life. Using the TCS, transition coordinators rate both their level of preparation, as well as their performance of specific transition competencies. Having this knowledge should allow schools, districts, and states an opportunity to determine whether transition coordinators are being adequately prepared to plan and deliver transition services; and whether they are appropriately utilizing their professional capacity to provide transition services. The TCS can also be used to gauge whether individual competencies and their implementation of transition practices are increasing across time (Morningstar, 2010). It is believed that by developing a survey such as the TCS, professionals will better understand the connection between a teachers' likelihood of

implementing effective transition-related activities and their perceived level of preparation (Benitez, Morningstar, & Frey, 2009), thus encouraging the link between adequate transition coordinator preparation and successful postschool outcomes for students with disabilities.

All schools have secondary special education teachers working directly with students with disabilities teaching them valuable skills to assist in their transition to adulthood. However, these teachers should not and do not fill the same role as a transition coordinator (Benitez et al., 2009). Transition coordinators work as liaisons to bridge the gap between students, families, schools, communities, and agencies, and in that role, oversee the coordination of multiple aspects of a student's transition (Morningstar & Benitez, 2013). Transition coordinators and secondary special education teachers together can work to ensure the most effective education for a student with a disability by providing distinct yet interconnected services.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop and validate the use of a new instrument, the *Transition Coordinators Survey* (TCS), to measure transition coordinators' level of preparedness and performance. By addressing the following research questions, evidence has been gathered for the use of the measure. The research described here combines descriptive, scaling, and statistical procedures to address the following research questions:

1. Is there evidence of validity in the *Transition Coordinators Survey*?
2. Is there evidence of reliability in the *Transition Coordinators Survey*?

Through a series of expert and transition coordinator reviews and analysis of participant scores, evidence has been gathered for content-related validity and the measure's usefulness for differentiating transition coordinators' levels of preparedness and how well the transition

activities are implemented. The sample included 1,346 transition coordinators from 48 states and 5 U.S. territories.

In the following chapters, Chapter Two will present a literature review of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and its importance to secondary special education and transition as well as a more detailed description of the roles that transition coordinators play, their potential impact on secondary special education teachers, and the importance of researching evidence-based practices. In Chapter Three, a description of the methodology used will be provided, including: (a) sampling procedures; (b) instrument development; (c) competency selection; (d) social validity; (e) data collection; and (f) data analysis. Chapter Four will discuss the results of the study, including a description of the demographic variables of the participants and descriptions of the means of the domain items. Chapter Five will lead the reader in a discussion of the results, a summary of the survey domains, and implications and limitations of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1997) was reauthorized in 2004, it moved the requirement for transition services from age 14 back to age 16. In IDEA's previous legislation, transition planning was required to start at age 14 for all students with disabilities who had an individualized education program (IEP). Presumably, this is because it was recognized that age 16 is too late to plan for the comprehensive activities that lead to a student's successful transition into adulthood (Weidenthal & Kochhar-Bryant, 2007). The change back to age 16 has significant implications for adolescents receiving special education services, meaning they in essence lose two years of valuable planning time (Weidenthal & Kochhar-Bryant). These two years can be key for certain student populations. For example, students with intellectual disabilities are the least likely to be involved in postsecondary education or competitive employment (Grigal, Hart, & Migliore, 2011), and would benefit from a more comprehensive transition program while in high school.

In the United States, almost one third of public high school students fail to graduate each year (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006; National High School Center, 2007). The Alliance for Excellent Education (2010) reported that almost 7,000 students drop out each school day. Rumbaut (2004) indicated that one in five people, aged 18-34, did not finish high school. Of those who did, only 19% earned a college degree. According to Swanson (2004), high school dropouts are more likely to be unemployed, earn lower wages, and have higher rates of public assistance.

The statistics are even more confounding for students with disabilities. Data continue to show that individuals with disabilities have higher dropout rates and higher unemployment rates than individuals without disabilities, although the gap is starting to close (Cameto & Levine, 2005; Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009; Office of Special Education Programs, 2010). The National Organization on Disability's 2010 survey of Americans with disabilities found that 21% of people with disabilities are employed full or part-time, compared with 59% of people without disabilities. Additionally, youth with disabilities are more likely to experience lower pay, job dissatisfaction, and unemployment or underemployment (Dunn, 1996; Wagner, Cameto, & Newman, 2003). Data from the 2005 NLTS2 Wave 3 interviews reported that two years after high school completion, 57% of youth with disabilities were employed compared with 66% of similarly aged youth from the general population (Newman et al., 2009). Students with disabilities are not obtaining the same outcomes at the same rate as general education students.

The challenges that students with disabilities face may be partially due to secondary special education teachers feeling unprepared to plan and deliver transition services (Benitez, et al., 2009). Morningstar and Benitez (2013) suggest that teachers who are unprepared may be contributing to the poor outcomes of students with disabilities. An explanation for teachers' unpreparedness to plan and deliver transition services may be the lack of credentialing options, transition-relevant standards, and course requirements in the majority of states (Kleinhammer-Tramill, Geiger, & Morningstar, 2003).

It is the role of our nation's schools to educate students from the time they enter the doors until they depart. One aspect of that role includes planning and delivering transition services for students with disabilities, as seen in the IDEA mandates which contain language specific to special educators responsibilities regarding transition (Morningstar & Benitez, 2013). The

professionals who undertake responsibility for a student's transition into adulthood are called transition coordinators. It is also important to understand the current literature and effective evidence-based practices surrounding the transition into adulthood for students with disabilities in order to grasp the significant role that transition coordinators play.

Transition coordinators are a distinct group of professionals who are recognized by major organizations. They are assumed to retain a specific set of knowledge and skills as described in documents such as The Council for Exceptional Children's *What Every Special Educator Must Know* (2009) and the Division on Career Development and Transition's *Transition Specialist Competencies* (2000). Unfortunately the research is not clear on the relationship between the competencies required of transition coordinators and what transition coordinators report they actually do on a day-to-day basis (Benitez, Morningstar, & Frey, 2009; Knott & Asselin, 1999; Morningstar & Benitez, 2013). The remainder of this chapter will highlight the impact of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004), the role of the transition coordinator, and the evidence-based practices that support students' successful transition into adulthood.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

In the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997, *transition services* were defined as

> a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that … is designed to be within a results-oriented process, focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and

adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation (IDEIA, 2004; 20 U.S.C. 1401(34)).

Transition services are based on each child's strengths, preferences, and interests and include instruction, related services, community experiences, and the development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives (IDEIA, 2004). In order to promote the movement from school to postschool activities there must be successful collaboration between schools and community agencies because there is no single agency that can meet the needs of all students in every area of transition (Chadsey-Rusch & Rusch, 1996). Interagency collaboration focused around transition is an integral piece of any student's successful transition to adulthood (Oertle & Trach, 2007). As Sitlington and Clark (2006) point out, a major barrier to students receiving coordinated and effective services is the fragmentation and inadequacy of those services and programs.

Individualized education programs. Schools are responsible for providing each student with a disability a free, appropriate public education with access to unique learning strategies and tools as fits the student. These individualized education programs are called IEPs for short. Along with a team of stakeholders, secondary special education teachers are the primary school personnel who are engaged in planning each student's individualized education program (IEP). According to the law, a student's IEP must include their present levels of academic achievement, their measurable annual goals, an explanation of the special education services they are to receive, and an explanation of why the student would not benefit by being with regular education peers during any parts of their school program (IDEIA, 2004). Specifically related to transition, an IEP must include "appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate,

independent living skills; and the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals (IDEIA, 2004; 20 U.S.C. 1414 (d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)).”

Indicator 13. As part of the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), states are required to develop performance plans around 20 indicators. These regulations provide guidance to states on how to implement IDEIA 2004 to ensure federal compliance (Gaumer Erickson, Noonan, Brussow, & Gilpin, 2013). Several of the indicators deal with special education, and the 13th deals with secondary transition services for students with disabilities. For compliance with Indicator 13, states are required to collect data annually and report the

> percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student’s transition services needs. There must also be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority (IDEIA, 2004; 20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)).

The IDEIA 2004 indicators acknowledge that the federal government is shifting towards a results-oriented process, instead of solely compliance, and helps states report accurate data on their special education processes (Gaumer Erickson, et al., 2013). To assist states in documenting the coordination of transition services and report their findings, the National Secondary

Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) developed a checklist, approved by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in 2006 (NSTTAC, 2006).

Secondary Special Education Teachers

Secondary special education teachers are involved in planning a student's IEP and providing instruction (Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, in press). They are responsible for teaching specific skills, planning lessons, and helping to manage the daily routine of students with disabilities. They are also the IEP case managers for students, and they are responsible for identifying and providing curriculum modifications and assisting regular education teachers with implementing those modifications; identifying support accommodations needed in the community; and ensuring that students are indeed receiving the transition planning and services to which they are entitled.

One of the most vital aspects of a transition coordinator's job is being able to make valuable links between the school, students, and community. Unfortunately, secondary special education teachers have reported having little understanding of and experience with interagency collaboration or how best to support families during transition. For example, Blanchett (2001) reported that out of 30 key transition competencies, the majority (89% or more) of teachers rated competencies in the communication domain highly, yet on average less than 67% reported receiving training, with the majority of training happening during inservice hours and only an average of 5% receiving preservice training. Examples of these competencies include: involve parents; gain interagency cooperation; involve employers; and participate as part of a multidisciplinary team. In addition, Knott and Asselin (1999) reported that teachers rated their involvement in the transition process (e.g., coordinating support agencies) as low yet "family and student involvement in transition planning" was ranked as the most important item and

"interagency collaboration for transition planning" at the fourth most important item out of 71 listed competencies. Twenty years after Knott and Asselin's article (1999), Li, Bassett, and Hutchinson (2009) report a great improvement in the field. They surveyed secondary special educators and transition coordinators about how involved they were in specific transition activities. Overall, the secondary special educators ranked lowest in the interagency collaboration and job development domains. In contrast, the transition coordinators surveyed ranked highest in the transition planning and interagency collaboration domains. It is important for secondary special education teachers to be aware of interagency collaboration processes yet it is the transition coordinators themselves who should understand the methods used regarding interagency collaboration and be responsible for linking students to the community

Secondary Teachers Transition Survey. The Secondary Teachers Transition Survey (STTS) was created as a tool for secondary special education teachers and asks questions directly related to their involvement in transition. It is a self-rating scale and was designed to gather relevant information on perceived competencies of secondary special education teachers (Benitez & Morningstar, 2005). It deals directly with secondary special education teachers' perceptions of their own transition competencies, their levels of satisfaction with their transition training, and the extent to which they deliver transition services to students. The STTS has undergone content and face validity by: (a) documenting transition competencies within the professional literature (e.g., Council for Exceptional Children General Curriculum Standards); (b) identifying specific transition domains; (c) employing expert reviewers to examine domains and competencies; and (d) conducting an iterative content analysis. The STTS has an established high reliability rating (Cronbach's alpha coefficient for item consistency across subscales is .96, .97, and .94). Taken together, the 6 domains and 46 competencies are intended to support secondary special education

teachers in fulfilling a variety of responsibilities and diverse roles and for managing educational expectations (Benitez et al., 2009). Although a useful and needed instrument, findings from past research with transition coordinators who have completed the STTS have indicated that it does not adequately reflect their daily job duties and position requirements (Morningstar, 2010; Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, 2009), and the creation of a new survey dealing directly with transition coordinators would be a welcome addition to the field.

Impact on secondary special education teachers. When school districts have effective transition coordinators, the weight of providing transition services is lifted from the secondary special education teachers and allows them to be more effective classroom teachers. Knott and Asselin (1999) found that there were gaps in knowledge and involvement in transition planning and service delivery with secondary special education teachers. The teachers had a general understanding of problems, issues, concepts, and definitions related to transition; however, they lacked the skills to implement important activities in the transition process. Teachers lacked knowledge of more in-depth concepts such as adult service agencies and family support services yet rated eight out of nine areas as medium to high importance. Teachers clearly felt that the activities surrounding transition were important but lacked the know-how of implementation.

Benitez and colleagues (2009) found in their multistate study of special education teachers' perceptions of transition competencies that teachers reported feeling somewhat unprepared to somewhat prepared about their overall level of preparation in transition; neutral to somewhat unsatisfied in their overall level of satisfaction with their transition training; and reported they were rarely to occasionally engaged in transition activities with students. In short, teachers felt that they were or could be prepared to handle transition issues, yet weren't happy with the training they received in it and rarely had the opportunity to help students take part in

transition activities. Benitez et al. also report a significant and large positive correlation that indicated teachers who felt more prepared to plan and deliver transition services performed those activities more frequently.

It appears that only teachers who perceive that they are well prepared are likely to implement effective transition-related activities in their classrooms (Noonan, Morningstar, and Gaumer Erickson, 2008). In this study, Noonan and colleagues discuss the strategies used by high-performing districts to improve the relationships between schools and adult agencies in order to reach shared transition goals. Even though not all states support the formal role of a transition coordinator and only a few personnel preparation programs address transition standards (Anderson et al., 2003), some of the top strategies that came out of the Noonan (2008) study report how vital the formalized role of the transition coordinator was to these high-performing districts. Teachers interviewed for this study comment that they should not act as the transition coordinator due to the classroom duties they deal with on a daily basis. They add that they simply cannot teach in a classroom while coordinating and networking in the community, and that the role of transition coordinators are central to establishing solid transition programs.

Morningstar and Benitez (2013) describe the differences between secondary special education teachers and transition coordinators. In their study, they reveal that transition coordinators were the most prepared to perform transition activities, as well as more likely to implement transition practices over those secondary special education teachers who are engaged in only some aspects of transition (such as IEP transition planning, instruction, or assessment). Transition coordinators need the flexibility to be able to act as a liaison to the community and be involved in activities away from school grounds and outside normal school hours. Given that transition coordinators are different from secondary special education teachers and that they

work outside of a traditional classroom at the collaborative and program level of the school, the ways in which they are prepared and trained should also be different.

Transition Coordinators

The school professional typically responsible for collaboration with community agencies to ensure a student's successful transition into adulthood is called the transition coordinator (also known as the transition specialist). Transition coordinators spend considerably less time in classrooms than secondary special education teachers and devote more attention to activities such as participating on a multidisciplinary team, assessing vocational preferences, conducting transition meetings, and gaining interagency collaboration (Blanchett, 2001). Research has been conducted and articles written about the competencies expected of transition coordinators. Transition coordinators perform competencies such as: participating in transition councils (Noonan, 2004) and assisting with grant writing (Morningstar, 2010).

Noonan, Morningstar, and Gaumer Erickson (2008) report that the most effective transition programs have transition coordinators who provide coordination and support across systems, instead of relying on secondary special education teachers to fill these roles. Transition coordinators should be allowed flexible scheduling and given the time and resources to provide transition services, including networking within the community and attending meetings outside of the typical school building and hours. One administrator who was interviewed for the Noonan et al. study stated that the two transition coordinators in his district "have very clear responsibilities, but neither of them have a set schedule." That is perhaps a perfect synopsis of the flexibility transition coordinators need to be able to perform their job to the fullest and make an impact in the community.

The rest of this section will discuss the roles that transition coordinators play. It will also explore transition coordinator competencies found in the literature using Asselin, Todd-Allen, and deFur's 1998 article as a framework. Finally, examples of research from related fields highlighting the importance of transition and the transition coordinator role are presented as an insight into the high value of these professionals.

Transition coordinator roles. Transition coordinators play a key role in whether students with disabilities will be prepared for success after high school by ensuring secondary special education teachers are informed of methods and best practices for transition planning (Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, in press). Transition coordinators do not typically provide direct services to students, but rather their knowledge and skills are used to oversee the coordination of the multiple and varied aspects of a student's transition to adulthood (Blalock et al., 2003; Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, in press). They work as liaisons between students, families, schools, communities, and agencies to link the transition goals of students to realistic postschool options (Morningstar & Benitez, 2013). They have been identified as "working closely with multiple agencies, often parents, to initiate and secure adult services for youths with disabilities" (Noonan, et al., 2008, p. 136). As more is learned about the specific tasks, skills, and duties transition coordinators perform they have been compiled by researchers into competencies. The next section will give a look at transition coordinator competencies found in the literature.

Transition coordinator competencies. Transition coordinators are required to possess a different set of knowledge and skills than secondary special education teachers who provide daily instruction to students (Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, 2009). This is because they are required to perform different job responsibilities. More specifically, the transition coordinator is

typically the professional who is responsible for: (a) intraschool coordination; (b) interagency linkages; (c) assessment and career counseling; (d) transition planning; (e) education and community training; (f) family support; (g) public relations; (h) program development; and (i) program evaluation (Asselin, Todd-Allen, & deFur, 1998). As one of the first and most comprehensive portrayals of the transition coordinator profession, Asselin, Todd-Allen, and deFur (1998) conducted a focus group with individuals working as transition coordinators in Virginia. They identified over 150 specific job duties which were reduced to 71 competencies spread over nine categories. These nine categories described by Asselin, Todd-Allen, and deFur will serve as the background for the discussion about transition coordinator competencies.

Intraschool linkages. A transition coordinator plays a vital role as a liaison for students while on campus. They facilitate communication between special education, regular education, and vocational teachers and they assist school staff in understanding a student's strengths, weaknesses, and necessary modifications for working. In addition, twelve specific competencies came out of the Asselin, Todd-Allen, and deFur (1998) study regarding the role that transition coordinators play within the schools they work in, including: (a) disseminate transition information to teachers and administrators; (b) facilitate appropriate referrals to school-based programs; and (c) provide technical assistance to school staff. Transition coordinators also spend time providing specialized assistance to teachers, schools, and families (Morningstar, 2010) and performing other tasks throughout the school day which a classroom teacher would not have the flexibility to do. Transition coordinators are valuable in facilitating a positive working relationship between the students and the school while organizing work experiences.

Interagency linkages. When professionals have strong collaborative relationships with outside agencies such as vocational rehabilitation, the transition process is more likely to be

successful and lead to better post-school outcomes (Gowdy, Carlson, & Rapp, 2003; Noonan et al., 2008). In their 1995 study of needed competencies in the transition field, deFur and Taymans found coordination, communication, and collaboration to be the three most important job competencies for transition coordinators. Interagency linkages are activities such as: (a) lead interagency transition meetings; (b) educate adult services about agencies and school programs/procedures; and (c) link students with postsecondary special support coordinators (Asselin, Todd-Allen, & deFur, 1998).

Kohler's Taxonomy for Transition Planning (1996) presents a complete model for transition programs. In the Taxonomy, 133 competencies are identified and fall within five domains. There are 16 competencies in the interagency collaboration domain, including: (a) coordinated and shared delivery of transition-related services; (b) collaborative program planning and development, including employer involvement; (c) established methods of communication among service providers; and (d) interagency coordinating body that includes consumers, parents, service providers, and employers.

Transition coordinators have been found to employ specific strategies and skills such as communicating with a wide spectrum of agencies and participating in transition councils that enhance the link between schools and the community (Noonan, 2004; Noonan et al., 2008). And of course transition coordinators are required to know and use a different set of competencies than secondary special education teachers (Morningstar, 2010). Interagency linkages, also known as interagency collaboration, tend to be a main role of transition coordinators since it is at the heart of transition: bridging the gap between school and work. Noonan et al. (2008) analyzed key strategies used by high-performing districts to encourage interagency collaboration. Several identified strategies involve the roles that transition coordinators play, including: (a) being

flexible while working with adult agencies by accommodating their need and limitations; (b) facilitating meetings between adult agencies and students and families; and (c) assisting families and students after they have exited school services.

Assessment and career counseling. Assessment and career counseling competencies include items such as: (a) identify and refer students for vocational assessments; (b) coordinate the development of career awareness and explore activities as part of the career counseling process; and (c) facilitate implementation of recommendations of reports by communicating and interpreting results with parents, teachers, and others (Asselin, Todd-Allen, & deFur, 1998).

Morningstar, Kim, and Clark (2008) developed a survey used to identify the competencies of practitioners enrolled in a transition teacher education program. Their study compared the pre- and post-assessment levels of these practitioners on the same measure throughout their time enrolled in the program. Results for the matched pre- and post-test scores showed significant differences, meaning that the transition program and coursework were extremely effective at teaching the practitioners specific transition competencies needed in the field. Participants reported that knowing transition information would be beneficial to their jobs, and it would help them advocate for their students and plan for transition. Examples of competencies addressed included those which fall into Asselin, Todd-Allen, and deFur's (1998) assessment and career counseling domain, such as: adapt appropriate assessment approaches to determine the needs, preferences, and interests of persons with disabilities at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels (Morningstar, Kim, & Clark, 2008). Without transition coordinators performing these tasks, there would be a lack of continuity in a student's program and no way for the students and their families to understand how assessments taken in school translate into more successful job placements in the community.

Transition planning. Transition coordinators provide valuable input into a student's transition plan, even if they are not the person to write IEPs. They attend and participate in team and IEP meetings, assist in planning and placement decisions, and oversee the development of postsecondary employment or training plans for students (Asselin, Todd-Allen, & deFur, 1998). Transition coordinators may also identify appropriate assistive technology for students, and identify which transition services provided by community agencies would be the best fit for a student.

Another domain in Kohler's Taxonomy for Transition Planning (1996) is student-focused planning. Competencies represented in this domain are three-fold and include specific items outlined in the areas of IEP development, student participation, and planning strategies. IEP development includes items such as: (a) educational program corresponds to specific goals; (b) post-secondary education or training goals and objectives specified in the IEP; and (c) goals are measurable. Items that fall under student participation include: (a) planning meeting time and place conducive to student and family participation, and (b) planning team includes student, family members, and school and participating agency personnel. Lastly, items that fall within planning strategies include: (a) planning decisions driven by student and family, and (b) IEP involvement training for students.

Li (2004) found that transition planning and transition instruction and curriculum were the highest rated factors on the *Transition Involvement Questionnaire*; meaning that professionals were found to be the most involved with activities that fall into those categories, such as developing transition goals and objectives. On average, those who took Li's survey slightly agreed that they were adequately trained in transition services, and while an improvement from past studies it does not guarantee a smooth and successful transition for

special education students. Li (2004) hopes that these results show that transition coordinators have been able to increase their efforts in engaging in the transition planning process.

Education and community training. The largest of the domains developed by Asselin, Todd-Allen, and deFur (1998), the competencies within the education and community training domain detail the responsibilities of a transition coordinator when they are preparing students for work in the community, setting up learning opportunities, and working with employers and supervisors. In this domain, transition coordinators perform tasks such as: train special education teachers and employers to understand the need for self-advocacy. They also identify job placements, monitor and coordinate job coaching activities, and examine/identify postsecondary training and education options.

The student development domain in Kohler's Taxonomy (1996) most closely represents the Asselin, Todd-Allen, and deFur (1998) competencies found in their education and community training domain. Kohler breaks this domain into six sections: (a) life skills instruction; (b) employment skills instruction; (c) career and vocational curricula; (d) support services; (e) assessment; and (f) structured work experience. Items that comprise the competencies include apprenticeships, self-advocacy skills training, job seeking skills training, and use of mentors. Likewise, Morningstar, Kim, and Clark (2008) included competencies such as "identify critical student skills, behaviors and supports for successful transition to community and independent living" in their study examining transition teacher education programs. Other than the transition coordinator, there would be no other school staff available that could complete the tasks outlined by researchers in this domain. Some of the most important aspects of keeping a successful transition program running are covered here, such as self-advocacy, job coaching, and work-based learning opportunities. Without somebody to oversee the multiple facets of off-

campus options for special education transition students, there would not be a most effective way to prepare students for adulthood.

Family support. Family support is essential to a student's success. Asselin, Todd-Allen, & deFur's (1998) focus group identified six components of a transition coordinator's job related to family support. Transition coordinators should be able to: (a) inform parents/families of community resources (understanding services); (b) develop and provide parent training; (c) promote understanding of laws, eligibility requirements, availability of services; (d) assist students/families in understanding the system and accessing services; (e) mediate between schools and families; and (f) counsel and communicate with parents regarding parent/student changing roles.

Transition coordinators have been found to employ specific strategies and skills such as meeting with and training students and families about adult-agency services (Noonan, 2004; Noonan et al., 2008). They provide training on transition-related planning processes, develop parent/family support networks, and participate in the evaluation of students programs (Kohler, 1996). They apply their knowledge of family systems to transition planning and promote collaboration with families (Morningstar, Kim, & Clark, 2008).

It is also the responsibility of transition coordinators to recognize and respond to cultural differences in the families they serve. Transition coordinators are mindful to accept parents and families as full partners in the decision-making process, demonstrate effective communication strategies so that all family members can understand and participate, and use strategies for resolving conflict among families with different backgrounds, specifically with culturally and linguistically diverse families (Kim and Morningstar, 2007).

Public relations. Transition coordinators disseminate information (videos, print material, etc.) to employers and parents, provide awareness events and make presentations to employers, teachers, parents, students, and service organizations. They also promote work-based learning opportunities for students with local businesses and serve on a variety of community committees (Asselin, Todd-Allen, & deFur, 1998). Noonan (2004) and Noonan et al. (2008) both report the importance of transition coordinators being able to participate in joint training with adult-agency staff. By building rapport with community agencies, sponsoring events such as transition fairs, and serving on committees, transition coordinators build invaluable links between their schools and the community which helps to promote successful transition outcomes.

Program development. Program development competencies include: (a) develop system guidelines, programs, and procedures; (b) develop and manipulate transition curriculum; (c) collaborate with agencies for program development; and (d) write grants for supplemental services (Asselin, Todd-Allen, & deFur, 1998). Morningstar (2010) notes that one aspect of a transition coordinators job is that they have a higher level of engagement in their school or district by playing a role in activities such as developing guidelines regarding transition policies and assisting with grant writing for local, state, and national initiatives. Transition coordinators are responsible for seeing that transition program planning is outcome-based, that the transition program is being evaluated and improved upon on an ongoing basis, and that the administration, school board, and community support the program (Kohler, 1996).

Program evaluation. Transition coordinators conduct follow-up studies with students who have exited their transition program, analyze the information gained from the evaluations, and use that information to identify gaps in transition programs (Asselin, Todd-Allen, & deFur, 1998). They also complete reports, create evaluation forms, and conduct school and community

needs assessments. As in any endeavor, time must be spent to improve and adjust transition programs to make sure the program is being as effective as possible. When transition coordinators take the data gathered from evaluations and use it to improve their own transition programs, the outcomes for students with disabilities are certainly better.

In the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center's (NSTTAC) 2011 report *What Transition Specialists Needs to Know,* 27 specific competencies are presented in a timeline defined by the length of time the transition coordinator has had the job. All competencies that are outlined reflect that transition coordinators should have mastery over specific skills by the time he/she has been employed for one year. For instance, the competencies listed that transition coordinators should have mastered "within the first month" include: "have knowledge of transition-related legislation in fields of special and vocational education, rehabilitation, labor, and civil rights," "administer formal and informal transition assessments (i.e., self-determination, academic, career and vocational, independent living)," and "evaluate students' educational programs with respect to measurable post-school goals and alignment of those goals with instructional activities." The competencies expected become increasingly more involved the longer a transition coordinator has been employed. An example of the competencies listed for transition coordinators to master "within 3-6 months" include: "create opportunities for collaboration with other practitioners in the education system that are serving students with disabilities (e.g., curriculum coordinator, dropout prevention coach, career technical education coordinator)." Competencies listed for transition coordinators to master "within 1 year" include: "provide career education and exploration," "facilitate access into community services," "develop coordinated interagency strategies to collect, share, and use student assessment data, with appropriate input and authorization of students and families," and "identify future post-

school service needs using transition planning documents in conjunction with relevant agencies." Surely the skills a transition coordinator has gained while being employed will become more refined after he/she has had the job for more years, but looking at the list in entirety (NSTTAC, 2011) makes it seem as if the job can only be completed by multiple persons due to the in-depth and time-consuming nature of the competencies listed. Thankfully on a daily basis transition coordinators are out in the community and are building a network of connections that can provide services for students, which should help the transition coordinator to match up all the logistical pieces of the transition puzzle for students.

Related fields. Related fields have found the importance of transition-related competencies valuable, as seen in Plotner's 2009 study for the field of vocational rehabilitation. Plotner (2009) presented vocational rehabilitation professionals with a survey of 59 transition competencies and asked them to rate their importance, frequency of implementation, and level of preparation for delivering the services. Plotner (2009) consistently found that vocational rehabilitation professionals identified transition activities as being very important, but did not indicate they were as prepared or performed these activities as frequently. Three domains contained competencies that were found to be the most important, performed the most frequently, and that professionals were the most prepared to perform: (a) provide career planning and counseling; (b) provide career preparation experiences; and (c) facilitate allocation of resources. There was a significant difference in mean scores between these top three domains and the bottom four domains. Table 1 provides a list of domain rankings in Plotner's study.

Table 1

Domain Rankings

	Importance	Frequency	Preparedness
1. Provide Career Planning and Counseling	1	1	1
2. Facilitate Allocation of Resources	3	2	2
3. Provide Career Preparation Experiences	2	3	3
4. Promote Nonprofessional Support and Relationships	4	5	5
5. Build and Maintain Collaborative Partnerships	5	4	4
6. Promote Access and Opportunity for Student Success	6	6	6
7. Coordinate Program Improvement Activities	7	7	7

Table 2 highlights some of the specific competency items within the domains that scored the highest and lowest for importance, frequency, and preparedness.

Table 2

Highest and Lowest Competency Items for Importance

Highest
Provide career counseling services
Develop student vocational goals
Determine eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Lowest
Utilize theoretical and applied models of transition
Conduct follow-up studies (e.g., one-year post graduation)
Utilize research on student outcomes and effective transition practices

Highest and Lowest Competency Items for Frequency

Highest
Connect with local community rehabilitation providers
Develop student vocational goals
Determine eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Lowest
Conduct follow-up studies (e.g., one-year post graduation)
Connect students with peer mentors
Ensure students have access to culturally competent curricular materials

Highest and Lowest Competency Items for Preparedness

Highest
Connect with local community rehabilitation providers
Determine student eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation Programs
Understand career and employment trends

Lowest
Conduct follow-up studies (e.g., one-year post graduation)
Ensure students have access to universally designed curricular materials
Ensure students have access to culturally competent curricular materials

Specific competency items that scored highest for importance were: (a) provide career counseling services; (b) develop student vocational goals; and (c) determine eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. Items that scored lowest for importance were: (a) utilize theoretical and applied models of transition; (b) conduct follow-up studies (e.g., one-year post graduation); and (c) utilize research on student outcomes and effective transition practices. Competency items that scored highest for frequency were: (a) connect with local community rehabilitation providers; (b) develop student vocational goals; and (c) determine eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. Items that scored lowest for frequency were: (a) conduct follow-up studies (e.g., one-year post graduation); (b) connect students with peer mentors; and

(c) ensure students have access to culturally competent curricular materials. Competency items that scored highest for preparedness were: (a) connect with local community rehabilitation providers; (b) determine student eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation Programs; and (c) understand career and employment trends. Items that scored lowest for preparedness were: (a) conduct follow-up studies (e.g., one-year post graduation); (b) ensure students have access to universally designed curricular materials; and (c) ensure students have access to culturally competent curricular materials.

Even different fields are starting to use the concept of a transition coordinator to ensure a smooth and effective coordination of services for clients, as demonstrated by Betz and Redcay (2005) in the medical field. They depicted a role called a transition service coordinator for advanced practice nurses who work with adolescents with special healthcare needs. They described how the transition service coordinator role incorporates advanced practice dimensions of being the "clinical expert, consultant, change agent, leader, researcher, and educator" (p. 50). Their main role is to help oversee the transition of an adolescent between the pediatric and adult healthcare systems while still fostering and supporting the achievement of the adolescent's goals for adulthood, including care coordination. Care coordination is defined by Betz and Redcay (2005) as "addressing needs not only for healthcare, but also for service needs for career planning or finding a job, additional education or training, living independently, and developing a social network, including having an intimate relationship" (p.54).

Evidence-Based Practices and Predictors of Success

Recent research on evidence-based practices of effective transition programs show that there is an abundance of teaching in the area of student development (e.g., teaching cooking skills, teaching functional reading skills, teaching leisure skills), but little is being done in the

areas of student-focused planning, family involvement, interagency collaboration, and program structures (Test, Fowler, Richter, White, Mazzotti, Walker, Kohler, and Kortering, 2009). Cobb and Alwell's (2009) systematic review of 31 studies related to transition planning and transition outcomes found support for the improvement of transition-related outcomes of youth with disabilities in the areas of student-focused planning and student-development interventions. In this meta-analysis, evidence is shown that students with disabilities who were in transition programs that focused on student planning and development had better transition-related outcomes than students who were in no such program.

Greene and Kochhar-Bryant (2003) reviewed transition research and identified 10 best practices of effective transition programs:

> (a) interagency collaboration; (b) interdisciplinary collaboration; (c) integrated schools, classrooms, and employment; (d) functional life-skills curriculum and community-based instruction; (e) social and personal skills development and training; (f) career and vocational assessment and education; (g) business and industry linkages with schools; (h) development of effective Individualized Education Program (IEP) planning documents and processes addressing IDEA 1997 transition services language requirements; (i) student self-determination, advocacy, and input in transition planning; and (j) parent or family involvement in transition planning. (p.156)

These best practices were identified after the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in order to find out not only what transition programs were doing to assist students with disabilities in their transition to adulthood, but to pinpoint what were considered the most effective procedures.

Likewise, Test, Mazzotti, Mustian, Fowler, Koertering, & Kohler (2009) conducted a review of the literature to identify predictors of positive postschool outcomes, identifying 16 evidence-based practices. Of those 16, all were identified as affecting a student's postschool success and having a moderate or potential level of evidence. The 16 identified predictors are: (a) career awareness; (b) community experiences; (c) exit exam requirements/high school diploma status; (d) inclusion in general education; (e) interagency collaboration; (f) occupational courses; (g) paid employment/work experiences; (h) parental involvement; (i) program of study; (j) self-advocacy/self-determination; (k) self-care/independent living; (l) social skills; (m) student support; (n) transition program; (o) vocational education; and (p) work study. Four of the predictors (inclusion in general education, paid employment/work experience, student support, and self-care/independent living skills) were identified as predicting outcomes in all three postschool outcome areas: education, employment, and independent living. Through Test et al.'s review of the literature, the field has a solid set of evidence-based predictors of postschool success and direct evidence is given for how improving a specific area of a program (i.e., social skills or vocational education) will improve transition programs.

Test et al. (2009) emphasized the importance of conducting research that will support the field of transition with strong levels of evidence. Using's Kohler's *Taxonomy for Transition Programming* (1996), Test and colleagues conducted a literature review to identify evidence-based practices for improving transition services. They identified 32 practices which fell into five categories: (a) student-focusing planning (three practices); (b) student development (25 practices); (c) family involvement (one practice); (d) program structures (three practices); and (e) interagency collaboration (no practices). Even with all the identified predictors and practices of

effective transition programs, there still appears to be a disconnect between what the research states and what is actually happening in transition programs on a day-to-day basis.

Summary

Now that there is an understanding of the differences in roles and responsibilities between secondary special education teachers and transition coordinators, it is clear that they are two distinct positions. Surveys have been created for different purposes for secondary special education teachers, but as literature has emerged there's a need to find out what transition coordinators are doing and to track how their roles change over time. The creation of a new measure that can accurately reflect the competencies set out by the Council for Exceptional Children (2009), the Division on Career Development and Transition (2000), various articles reflecting competencies in the fields of special education and transition (e.g., Blanchett, 2001; Kohler, 1996; and Morningstar, Kim, & Clark, 2008), and the daily job duties as reported by transition coordinators is clearly welcome. Therefore, the survey proposed in this dissertation, The *Transition Coordinators Survey* (TCS), was specifically designed to target transition coordinators. It provides them with a list of transition competencies and asks them to rate their level of preparedness and their performance on each competency. This new measure can be used to gauge whether individual transition coordinator competencies and their implementation of transition practices are increasing across time (Morningstar, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop and validate the use of a new instrument, the TCS, to measure transition coordinators' level of preparedness with transition competencies and how well they deliver transition services to students. By addressing the following research questions, evidence has been gathered for the use of the measure to describe what transition coordinators

know about competencies. The research described here combines descriptive, scaling, and statistical procedures to address the following research questions:

1. Is there evidence of validity in the *Transition Coordinators Survey*?

2. Is there evidence of reliability in the *Transition Coordinators Survey*?

Through a series of expert and transition coordinator reviews and analysis of participant scores, evidence has been gathered for content-related validity and the measure's usefulness for differentiating transition coordinators' levels of preparedness and how well the transition activities are implemented.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

The primary purpose of this study was to develop and validate the *Transition Coordinators Survey (TCS)*, creating a valuable and practical instrument for the field of secondary special education and transition. The TCS was designed to specifically target the competencies expected of transition coordinators. There is no other known tool in the field of secondary special education and transition that is intended to measure these competencies. The design and development of a competency survey that is specific to transition coordinators more adequately fits their daily job duties and position requirements than other existing measures (Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, 2009) and allows further research of the efficacy of transition coordinators to take place (Morningstar, 2010). Being able to assess competencies helps inform the field about the transition coordinators' level of preparation of specific competencies and how well they rate themselves on performing these transition competencies. This allows school districts and states to reflect upon whether transition coordinators are being adequately prepared to plan and deliver transition services to students with disabilities in their schools.

The instrument asked transition coordinators to rate both their level of preparedness to perform various transition activities and how well they performed these activities. Validity was addressed throughout the development of the survey by: (a) conducting a comprehensive literature review that identified scholarly articles specifically addressing the competencies of transition coordinators; (b) conducting focus groups with a sample of highly qualified transition coordinators; and (c) conducting a review with national transition experts in the field of secondary special education and transition. Reliability was addressed by following appropriate

methods to develop a new instrument, such as conducting an item reliability analysis and reporting Cronbach's alpha. The research questions addressed are:

1. Is there evidence of validity in the *Transition Coordinators Survey*?
2. Is there evidence of reliability in the *Transition Coordinators Survey*?

Sampling Procedures

The participants in this study included transition coordinators from 48 states and 5 U.S. territories. A preliminary internet search was conducted to identify which states may have contact lists of district transition coordinators. Five states had open databases that were easily accessible with job titles and school email addresses of transition personnel. Approximately 404 email addresses were obtained using this method. Another source was based on resources from the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center that provided contact information for state educational agency transition personnel. States with identified staff responsible for transition were contacted via email or phone to request assistance with identifying local education agency transition coordinators.

Further, researchers attempted to contact all 50 state agencies, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories. Along with initial contact and several follow-up emails and phone calls, all but three states and four territories responded to participation requests. Three states preferred that their transition coordinators not be contacted because they had recently been asked to complete other surveys. Separately, two states and one territory stated there were no official transition coordinator positions in their area. Transition coordinators from these states were not recruited for the study, but were not blocked from taking the survey if they qualified and found out about it from other means.

A spreadsheet was developed to keep track of which states maintained electronic mailing lists and whether they were willing to share these lists with research staff; or if they would send out information about the study directly to transition coordinators (see Appendix A). Approval was sought from all states and territories before soliciting the transition coordinators for participation in the study. Eighteen states who maintained email lists agreed to share their lists directly with the research team. Eleven states did not provide a list, but did maintain an electronic mailing list and agreed to send out information about the study. For these states, a short description of the study along with a link to the online survey was provided. Using these state contacts, it was determined that 1,692 transition coordinators from 11 states were sent information about the survey in this manner. To calculate a closer approximation of respondents and response rates, states were asked to provide a total number of transition coordinators on their lists.

Individual transition coordinators identified by state education agency staff and shared with the research team included an additional 1,691 transition coordinators from 23 states and 1 U.S. territory. In total, approximately 3,790 transition coordinators were contacted and invited to participate in the study. Of those, an e-mail was sent directly to 2,555 individuals for whom we had direct contacts from SEA lists or state contacts. The research team used Constant Contact (www.constantcontact.com) to maintain all email correspondences. A short description of the study with a link to the online survey was used. The remaining 1,692 were sent survey information from their state electronic mailing lists. Table 3 details the states and specific contact methods used.

Furthermore, six states that did not maintain a statewide list of transition personnel agreed to forward the survey information to their local education agency (LEA) directors of

special education, to distribute to local transition coordinators. In addition, researchers successfully contacted three of these six states and identified (primarily regional) transition coordinators who were added to the spreadsheet. Survey information was distributed in person in two states via flyers shared at state meetings for transition coordinators. Two states posted the survey information on their website; and one state passed on the information to members of an informal transition organization. After multiple emails and phone calls, contact with three states and four territories were ultimately unsuccessful and recruitment in these states did not take place.

Table 3
Transition Coordinator Contact Methods

State	Contact Method		
	Open Access Online	Emails Provided by SEA	SEA Electronic Mailing Lists*
1. Alabama**			
2. Alaska			Unknown
3. Arizona		41	
4. Arkansas		20	
5. California		460	
6. Colorado			172
7. Connecticut			400
9. Florida	158		
10. Georgia**			
11. Hawaii			Unknown
12. Idaho		27	
13. Illinois			500
14. Indiana		77	
16. Kansas		170	
17. Kentucky		72	
20. Maryland		45	
22. Michigan	70		
23. Minnesota			Unknown
24. Mississippi**			
25. Missouri		83	
27. Nebraska		46	
28. Nevada**		37	
29. New Hampshire		46	
31. New Mexico	9		
32. New York		33	
33. North Carolina			120
34. North Dakota			Unknown
35. Ohio**		52	
37. Oregon	81		
38. Pennsylvania		184	
40. South Carolina		64	
42. Tennessee			Unknown
43. Texas**	86		500
48. West Virginia			Unknown
49. Wisconsin		231	
50. U.S. Territories		3	
Total	404	1,691	1,692

*Approximate numbers reported by SEAs
**Forwarded to SPED directors in state for distribution

Due to the nature of the snowball sampling used for this recruitment process, it was not possible to identify exact numbers of transition coordinators who received information about the survey, and therefore it was not possible to calculate an accurate response rate. It is known that out of a total of 2,201 individuals who attempted the survey, 1,470 completed it, and 1,346 were found to have usable data.

A power analysis was conducted to ensure adequate statistical power at 95% confidence to identify the number in a sampling frame and to test for internal reliability. In terms of power, a sample size greater than 209 was thought to be adequate based on a significance level (α) of .05, coefficient alpha (power) of .70, and effect size (Δ_I) of .15 (Shavelson, 1996). The usable sample of 1,346 proved more than adequate.

Instrument Development

A review of the literature was conducted to identify transition coordinator competencies. More than 30 articles were identified and reviewed, with publication dates ranging from 1995 to 2011. The steps used for identifying content for the TCS included:

1. Creating an initial framework for a matrix using the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) *What Every Special Educator Must Know* (2009) and the Division on Career Development and Transition's (DCDT) *Transition Specialist Competencies* (2000);
2. Conducting a thorough review of the literature to identify possible articles for inclusion;
3. Analyzing the content of identified articles and extracting transition competencies to add to matrix;
4. Collapsing competencies into categories or eliminating based on vague language; and

5. Grouping similar competencies together to identify domains.

Transition specialist competencies. The matrix was created using the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) *What Every Special Educator Must Know* (2009) and the Division on Career Development and Transition's (DCDT) *Transition Specialist Competencies* (2000) as the organizing framework. Specific sections of the CEC handbook that were examined included: (a) *Advanced Knowledge and Skills: Transition Specialists*; (b) *Initial Special Education Teachers of Individuals With Exceptional Learning Needs in Individualized General Education Curricula*; (c) *Initial Special Education Teachers of Individuals With Exceptional Learning Needs in Individualized Independence Curricula*; and (d) *Initial Special Education Teachers of Individuals With Exceptional Learning Needs With Developmental Disabilities and/or Autism*. These standards can be found online at the Council for Exceptional Children website (http://www.cec.sped.org/Standards).

After merging these established competencies, CEC's list contributed 16 competencies and DCDT's list contributed 35 competencies. These two sets of competencies were organized on the left-hand side of the matrix and as each article was reviewed, competencies were added in columns to the right of the framework (see Appendix B for a sample of the organizational matrix).

The six domains listed by CEC were: (a) Leadership and Policy; (b) Program Development and Organization; (c) Research and Inquiry; (d) Individual and Program Evaluation; (e) Professional Development and Ethical Practice; and (f) Collaboration. The eight standards listed by DCDT were: (a) Philosophical, Historical, & Legal Foundations of Special Education; (b) Characteristics of Learners; (c) Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation; (d) Instructional Content and Practice; (e) Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning

Environment; (f) Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills; (g) Communication and Collaborative Partnerships; and (h) Professionalism and Ethical Practices. These domains were organized in the matrix alongside each other and used as a starting point for constructing the organizing matrix.

Transition competency articles. More than thirty articles were identified and reviewed for possible inclusion. To be included, the 15 research articles (listed in Appendix C) addressed studies of secondary teacher or transition coordinator competencies related to transition. The criteria for inclusion were research articles addressing evidence-based practices, teacher surveys, and predictors of postschool success. The remaining 16 articles were reviewed and rejected for varying reasons (see Appendix D). Articles may have been rejected because the research focused on teacher preparation or university programs and did not adequately address the issue of transition competencies for professionals.

Competencies were identified from the 15 articles selected for inclusion and added to the overall matrix. Six hundred twenty-five competencies were identified from these 15 articles and included in the matrix. Table 4 provides an overview of the initial items each study contributed to the framework. Further content analysis led to categorizing the individual items into conceptual domains. Items were moved into groups based on competencies subject matter. For example, all items related to providing on-the-job support for students were grouped together. Items that generally were similar were collapsed in order to create the survey items. In some instances, items contained related but slightly different subject matter (e.g., coordinating work-based programs). Those items were considered for inclusion in either an existing item or creation of a new item. At each decision point, agreement across the 3-person research team took place. Competencies were then grouped by common themes.

Researchers first agreed upon the initial placement of competencies into the matrix framework, as well as where an item should be moved, if necessary, or deleted. The researchers used Google Drive (https://drive.google.com/) to maintain an active, working document which could be accessed from any computer and held multiple phone conference calls to discuss and agree upon the placement of items in the matrix. As competencies were identified from the research articles they were added to the matrix framework. After every two to three articles, the matrix was reviewed by the research team. This ensured that the content being added aligned with existing and emerging organizational framework. If an item did not align with the competencies or domains, it was included in an "other" category. To be included, each competency item had to have at least two distinct sources contributing to its identification. Through this process, 625 individual competencies were identified (see Table 4).

Table 4

Initial Contributing Competencies from Transition Articles

Author(s) and Publication Date	Number of Competency Items
1. Benitez, D., & Morningstar, M. E. (2005).	47
2. Betz, C. L., & Redcay, G. (2005).	31
3. Blanchett, W. J. (2001).	30
4. deFur, S. H., & Taymans, J. M. (1995).	20
5. Kim, K., & Morningstar, M. E. (2007).	37
6. Kohler, P. D. (1996).	133
7. Knott, L., & Asselin, S. B. (1999).	42
8. Li, J. (2004).	22
9. Li, J., Bassett, D. S., & Hutchinson, S. R. (2009).	28
10. Morningstar, M. E., Kim, K., & Clark, G. M. (2008).	53
11. Noonan, P., Morningstar, M. E., & Gaumer Erickson, A. (2008).	9
12. Plotner, A. J. (2009).	59
13. Test, D. W., Fowler, C. H., Richter, S. M., White, J., Mazzotti, V., Walker, A. R., Kohler, P., & Kortering, L. (2009).	33
14. Test, D. W., Mazzotti, V. L., Mustian, A. L., Fowler, C. H., Koertering, L., & Kohler, P. (2009).	54
15. Test, D. W., Scroggings, L. C., & Toms, O. M. (2011).	27
Total	625

Determining final domains and competencies. The final analysis of the competencies was held during a two-day meeting among the 3-person research team. Competency items were collapsed, reduced, expanded, and aligned with similar competencies from contributing articles. Decisions made during the final review of the matrix included first examining items from the research articles to ensure alignment with CEC and DCDT transition specialist domains and competencies. Second, competency items from the research articles were reviewed, looking for consistency and alignment across sources. Third, once alignment with CEC and DCDT domains was completed, items were then sorted into potentially new categories to allow for a closer alignment to new research or with other critical areas not addressed in the standards. Individual

competencies were eliminated if they were not supported by a minimum of two research articles or were not relevant to school transition coordinators. For example, at least two of the studies surveyed both educators and vocational counselors. Competencies specific to vocational rehabilitation counselors were eliminated. Lastly, subdomains were further delineated based on competencies remaining in the matrix. This occurred when broader competencies were split into more than one component for further clarification. For example, the broad "self-determination" competency area was divided into sub-competencies: (a) teach student self-determination skills; (b) develop self-determination curriculum; (c) incorporate opportunities for self-determination through planning; and (d) facilitate mentors/youth leadership.

After all items were reorganized within the matrix and collapsed into categories and subcategories or eliminated, the matrix was reduced to 575 competencies. The next step focused on examining items across competency categories to identify major domain areas. This entailed grouping similar knowledge and skill areas into broader domains and resulted in the emergence of eight domains: (a) Leadership and Policy; (b) Career Development; (c) Secondary Academic Programs; (d) Transition Planning; (e) Assessment; (f) Family Collaboration; (g) Interagency Collaboration and Processes; and (h) Community-Referenced Curriculum and Programs. A final matrix was created that included eight domains with 575 individual competency items. Table 5 details the number of CEC and DCDT competencies that contributed to each domain, the total number of competencies from all articles that contributed to each domain, and the number of sources that contributed to each domain.

Table 5

Contributing Competencies and Sources

Domain	CEC/DCDT Competencies	Total Competencies (All Articles)	Sources (Excluding CEC/DCDT)
1. Leadership and Policy	7	74	11
2. Career Development	5	74	11
3. Secondary Academic Programs	5	27	10
4. Transition Planning	11	91	14
5. Assessment	5	55	12
6. Family Collaboration	5	81	12
7. Interagency Collaboration and Processes	6	104	14
8. Community-Referenced Curriculum and Programs	8	69	11

Survey items were generated for each competency category within the domain groups; and then reviewed and revised to ensure consistent language, meaning, and focus. Researchers looked across each competency category, condensed wording and language among the multiple competencies to create a single survey item that represented the competency from across multiple sources. Agreement was reached between the three researchers on all survey items resulting in 70 competency items.

Survey construction. The initial draft of the survey with the 70 items was then examined more closely. Only one item was deleted during the survey construction period due to overlap. Three iterations of the survey occurred in which wording was enhanced and items were rearranged. The final survey contained 69 items across eight domains. Agreement checks were completed among the three researchers throughout the entire development process.

Focus groups. During the survey item construction, a group of 13 transition coordinators from across the country were chosen to participate in the focus groups. These transition coordinators were chosen due to their involvement in the field of secondary special education

and transition and their geographic location across the United States. They were identified from a pool of 40 graduates from a national transition certificate program. They were sent an email explaining the purpose of the survey and directions for completing it online. They had an opportunity to complete a portion of the survey, rate whether an item should remain in the survey or be removed, provide written feedback, and make overall comments. This feedback was collapsed across all respondents, analyzed using quantitative (e.g., mean scores for items to keep or remove) as well as qualitative methods based on their open-ended comments. These results were then used to guide the discussion of the telephone focus groups.

Each of the 13 transition coordinators participated in one of three telephone focus groups of approximately four participants per call. They were specifically asked about several aspects of the survey: (a) the look and feel; (b) whether the survey competency items accurately reflected their job duties; and (c) whether to keep or eliminate competency items in certain domains based on mean scores across all transition coordinators. They were also asked to identify specific roles and responsibilities that they perform on a consistent basis that were not included in the survey draft.

Analysis of focus group data occurred shortly after each focus group meeting, and modifications were made to the survey. Items were revised, added, or deleted, and some were collapsed within domains. For example, with regard to their roles related to IEPs, focus group participants distinguished their role of coordinating transition IEP meetings from the responsibilities of monitoring IEPs for compliance. Other changes to the survey included adding detailed instructions for each section of the survey and clarifying language of individual competency items (e.g., adding *when applicable for a student* and *as needed* to certain items). Focus group participants also suggested allowing for multiple responses on specified

demographic items such as the type of community setting they work in. An important change was to offer *not applicable* as a response choice for the performance domain items. This emerged from focus group discussions that some of the competencies did not directly reflect their specific job duties, due to geographic location and populations of students, for example, but were still relevant to others. This was especially relevant for professionals who worked part-time as a transition coordinator. They suggested allowing more flexibility in choice for the participants in order to have more people successfully take the survey and to ensure that the results were more reliable and valid. Focus group participants were offered compensation for participating, although some chose not to accept the offer.

Expert review. A team of seven national experts was selected to review the revised survey and provide feedback. The team was selected based on their national involvement in the field of secondary special education and transition. Almost all of the members authored articles that were used during the creation of the TCS. One member was the chair of the CEC knowledge and skills committee representing transition. After survey revisions were made based on the focus group feedback, the national experts were e-mailed a copy of the survey. A face-to-face meeting was arranged. The team was asked to review the survey before the meeting and come prepared to discuss the appropriateness of the domains and individual competency items. At the meeting, experts discussed overall concepts related to preparation and performance of transition coordinators. They also provided written detailed feedback per item following the meeting. Analysis of expert review data included the field notes from the face-to-face meeting along with the subsequent written feedback. Based on this input, modifications were made to the survey. Major changes to the survey included: (a) simplifying the name of the survey; (b) adding a question to the demographic section to help screen out participants who were not transition

coordinators; (c) specifying demographic information (i.e., part-time versus full-time transition coordinator); and (d) clarifying language on survey directions and specific competency items.

The Survey Instrument

The *Transition Coordinators Survey* (TCS) (see Appendix E) was designed online using an online tool for building surveys and collecting data. Specific demographic items were used to screen out non-eligible participants (e.g., those not currently working as a transition coordinator). Domain items were grouped together and data was analyzed using SPSS (Version 20). Participants were offered an incentive to complete the survey. They could fill out a simple contact form at the end of the survey if they wanted to be entered into a raffle to win a pre-paid MasterCard. The entire survey consisted of an information statement, 15 demographic items, and 69 competency items across eight domains. The participants rated their level of preparation as well as their performance for each competency. Participants used a Likert-type scale to rate their level of preparation (1 = *very unprepared* to 5 = *very prepared*) and their performance (1 = *poor* to 5 = *excellent*). Based on input from the focus group, *not applicable* was offered as a choice on the performance subdomain in order to help distinguish whether there were any competencies transition coordinators reported as not being a part of their job duties.

Survey design. The survey was designed and built online using Qualtrics (http://www.qualtrics.com/). With Qualtrics, survey items are easily organized. The researcher may pick the type of question to be asked (e.g., multiple choice, text entry, or rank order) and values can be used making the transfer of data into SPSS easier. All items on the TCS were selected with a "forced response," meaning that all items had to be answered before the participant could move on to the next set of items. The TCS was designed so that participants were presented with one domain at a time as to not be visually overwhelming. The survey also

sought specific demographic information, such as how long the respondent had been a transition coordinator, how many transition-specific college courses he/she had taken, what type of school or program he/she is working in, and whether he/she teaches transition-related content directly to students with disabilities. In order to ensure that survey respondents were indeed transition coordinators, a definition of *transition coordinator* as well as a series of questions (e.g., Are you currently a transition coordinator?) were presented to help eliminate unqualified participants. The definition given was "A transition coordinator/transition specialist is considered to be someone who works, either part-time or full-time, to coordinate transition planning and services for students for students with disabilities within a district or school setting." The demographic items are found in Appendix E.

Before the participants started the survey, an information statement was presented. The information statement (see Appendix F) specified that there were no assumed risks or discomfort associated with the survey, and explained the main goals of the survey (to help gain a better understanding of transition coordinator competencies) and that their responses would be kept anonymous and confidential. Participants could choose to withdraw from the study at any time. At the end of the online survey, participants were given the opportunity to provide their contact information if they wished to be entered into a drawing for a gift card.

Multiple response sets. Nine items allowed for a multiple response from participants, meaning they could select more than one answer to an item. For example, the choices to "Within what type of community setting is your school or district located?" were: rural, suburban, or urban. Since transition coordinators frequently work across community settings and, in some cases, across entire school districts, more than one type of response was allowed in order to capture the most accurate data. The other items that allowed for a multiple response were: (a)

What degrees do you have? (b) What type of licensure/certification do you have? (c) What is the grade level of students with disabilities whom you serve? (d) In what type of school or program do you serve as a transition coordinator/transition specialist? (e) If public school, what type of school? (only given to those who selected "public school" from the item above); (f) What types of students with disabilities do you serve? (g) Please mark the following content areas you teach; and (h) How do you teach these content areas? These last two questions were given only to those who selected that they taught one or more transition-related courses/course content directly to students with disabilities.

To analyze the data from the multiple response sets, new "multiple response" variables were created in SPSS. This allowed SPSS to handle the data appropriately and compute totals for each choice selected as well as percentages by case (SPSS gives the percent of participants who selected each answer choice).

Domains. Items were presented to survey participants in groups by domains, but before the data analysis could occur, individual competency items were again grouped into the eight domains in SPSS: (a) Transition Planning; (b) Assessment; (c) Family Collaboration; (d) Secondary Academic Programs; (e) Community-Referenced Curriculum and Programs; (f) Career Development; (g) Interagency Collaboration; and (h) Leadership and Policy. This allowed for a broad overview of the domain means and an easier comparison than looking at each competency item on an individual basis. There were between six and 11 items in each domain, for a total of 69 items across all domains.

Rating scales. The survey consists of two rating scales, preparation and performance, in which different data was gathered for the same competency item. For all items participants would answer how prepared they were to perform the activity, and they would also rate their

performance on the activity. For the preparation scale, participants were asked “How prepared are you to perform the activity?” and given a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *very prepared* to *very unprepared*, with *neutral* included. For the performance scale, participants were asked “Please rate your performance on the following transition activities” and given a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *excellent* to *poor* with an additional answer choice of *not applicable*. Not applicable was offered as an answer choice on the performance scale because transition coordinator job duties may not include performance of all competency items. In this way, not applicable data was marked as missing from the performance response; and therefore not calculated in mean scores. In addition, for subsequent research studies, the not applicable data could be further analyzed and compared among respondents to further ascertain differences in specific job duties.

Screening out participants. In order to qualify to complete the survey, participants had to agree to participate via the information statement and be currently employed as a transition coordinator. If they said they were not currently a transition coordinator, they were presented with three additional questions: what is their current job role, and when and why they left the position of transition coordinator. During the analysis of the data, several other groups of participants were excluded from the study: (a) those that did not complete the entire survey; and (b) those that did not have a teaching licensure/certification. This step was done to ensure that only school transition coordinators participated, given that some states may use the term “transition coordinator” to describe a job different from the position used for this study. This also screened out other agency staff that may have a similar title but do not work for school districts.

Social Validity Procedures

Social validity was established in several ways. First, focus groups were held with transition coordinators representing eight states: Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas. The purpose of the focus groups was to offer feedback and input, particularly regarding the competencies included in the survey draft. In addition, a team of seven expert reviewers who were primarily the authors of the research used during the survey construction were asked to review the survey. A face-to-face meeting was held in which the experts provided verbal feedback with follow-up written feedback. As described earlier, the survey was revised based on this substantial feedback.

Data Collection

In September 2012, individual e-mails were sent out to the list of 2,555 e-mail addresses from 44 states compiled during the sampling process. The e-mails were sent via Constant Contact, introducing the survey and asking transition coordinators to participate. The e-mails included a brief description of the survey and an explanation of why it was being conducted. A link was provided that would give the participants access to the survey. An e-mail was also sent out to the 11 state contacts who agreed to share the survey information with 1,692 transition coordinators via appropriate state electronic mailing lists. Two weeks after the initial e-mail, a reminder e-mail was sent to both the individuals on the list and to state contacts.

There were many benefits of using Constant Contact and the online survey format, including: (a) fast response time; (b) ability to track how many people opened, deleted, clicked through, or forwarded the e-mails; (c) less time intensive and less expensive than mailing a paper survey; and (d) ability to reach a large amount of transition coordinators, which would have been

difficult via traditional means. The survey was hosted online via Qualtrics (http://www.qualtrics.com/). The online survey was active for approximately 1 month.

Data Analysis

When the cut-off date for completing the survey passed, it was closed down in Qualtrics and the data was transferred into SPSS (Version 20). During this step, a filter was added so that the data analysis would only include those who completed the survey, were currently working as a transition coordinator and had teaching licensure/certification. Means and standard deviations were calculated for demographic variables. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was calculated for the domains and subdomains (preparedness and performance).

Several demographic items allowed for multiple responses (e.g., What degrees do you have?) and this data needed to be analyzed differently in SPSS. Several branched items also prompted questions which were only asked of participants based on how they responded. For example, if a participant stated that they worked part-time as a transition coordinator, they were given a sub-item to complete (e.g., If part-time, what other roles do you fulfill?); if a participant stated that they held a Master's degree, they were asked whether or not their Master's degree was in transition. Individual competency items were grouped together to create new variables when the domain totals could be calculated.

Item reliability estimates. An analysis of the items from the two subscales (preparedness and performance) in each domain was conducted to determine which competency items were redundant, overlapped with other items, or failed to contribute to a factor. In order to allow for the possible deletion of items following the analysis, more items than were needed for each domain were developed and included in the instrument. Each domain contained an average of eight items, ranging from 6 to 11 items per domain. The internal consistency reliability for the

entire instrument was excellent ($\propto = .964$). After running the item reliability analysis it was found that it would not improve the reliability of the instrument to delete any item, hence no items were deleted from the survey.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

In this chapter, the results of the data collection and the research questions are described. The chapter is organized in three sections: (a) survey responses; (b) respondent characteristics; and (c) research questions. The first section gives a basic description of the survey response process. The second section provides demographic characteristics of the respondents and a descriptive data analysis, including frequencies and percentages. The third section seeks to answer the research questions of this study.

Survey Responses

In September 2012, approximately 2,550 emails were sent out via Constant Contact to individual transition coordinators as well as state contacts who agreed to distribute the survey information to their transition coordinators. The email included a brief description of the survey, an explanation of why it was being conducted, and a link to the online survey. Two weeks after the initial email was sent, a reminder email was sent out. Overall, 5,115 emails were sent using Constant Contact. Of these, 18.4% (940) bounced back; 26.2% (1,094) of the recipients opened the emails; 49.6% (541) of those that opened the email clicked the link; and 0.6% (7) forwarded the email. It was not possible to identify the true number of transition coordinators that were sent information about the survey because many states (23) did not provide access to their mailing lists. However, it is believed that approximately 1,690 transition coordinators were sent information about the survey via their state electronic mailing lists based on approximations provided by the state contacts.

Overall, 2,201 people attempted the survey, with 1,470 people completing it. Among the 1,470 who completed the survey, 1,346 (91.6%) of the responses were found to be usable and are

included in the data analysis. Among the 731 that did not complete the survey, the primary reasons were disqualification (i.e., not a transition coordinator) or timing out. If a person started the survey but did not complete it in one setting, the survey would stay open in the system for one week, giving them time to come back and finish the survey. Those who timed out did not come back to complete the survey. The main reasons why respondents were excluded from the data analysis includes: not currently employed as a transition coordinator or did not have licensure or certification as a teacher.

Respondent Characteristics

Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the respondents' characteristics. For each demographic variable, percentages are reported. For items that allowed a multiple response, the total percentage is more than 100%.

Full-time versus part-time employment. Respondents were asked whether they worked full-time or part-time as a transition coordinator, and if part-time, what their other job roles were. More than half (58.2%) of the respondents reported being employed full-time as a transition coordinator, and the remaining 41.8% (552) reported part-time. Of those working part-time, 16.9% (227) were also a classroom teacher, 7.2% (97) were working as a coordinator/specialist in an area other than transition, and 5.3% (72) were working in an administrative capacity (i.e., principal, administrator, superintendent, or director). Table 6 reports specific data comparing full-time to part-time transition coordinators. In general, full-time and part-time transition coordinators reported similar average number of years working in transition. They also were similar in the number of transition courses taken. More full-time transition coordinators had completed a Master's degree in transition than part-time transition coordinators; however, the percentage among each group was small. Equal percentages of full-time and part-time transition

coordinators collaborated with middle school teachers. Similarly, approximately one-half of both full-time and part-time transition coordinators reported teaching transition courses directly to students.

Table 6

Demographics for Full-Time Versus Part-Time Transition Coordinators (Mixed Values)

	Full-Time			Part-Time		
	N	$\bar{x}$	%	N	$\bar{x}$	%
1. Full-Time v. Part-Time	784		58.2	562		41.8
2. Years as Transition Coordinator		7.00			6.35	
3. College Courses		1.69			1.40	
4. Master's Degree in Transition	35		4.5*	12		2.1*
5. Collaborate with Middle School	495		63.1*	366		65.1*
6. Teach Transition Courses	301		38.4*	188		33.5*

*Percentages within full-time or part-time transition coordinators

Years working as a transition coordinator. Just over half of the respondents reported having worked as a transition coordinator for 5 years or less (51.6%). About a quarter reported having worked between six to 10 years (24.1%); and about a quarter reported having worked between 11 and 15 or more years (24.2%).

States and Territories. Forty-eight states and five U.S. territories were represented in the study. The largest numbers of respondents came from Arizona (8.2%) and Pennsylvania (8.2%). Table 7 shows frequency of the states and territories in which respondents reported working. There were no respondents from Maine, Montana, or the District of Columbia.

Table 7

Participating States and Territories

	Respondents	
	N	%
1. Alabama	48	3.6
2. Alaska	14	1.0
3. Arizona	110	8.2
4. Arkansas	10	.7
5. California	71	5.3
6. Colorado	37	2.7
7. Connecticut	48	3.6
8. Delaware	18	1.3
9. Florida	18	1.3
10. Georgia	21	1.6
11. Hawaii	1	.1
12. Idaho	7	.5
13. Illinois	92	6.8
14. Indiana	10	.7
15. Iowa**	4	.3
16. Kansas	47	3.5
17. Kentucky	14	1.0
18. Louisiana	1	.1
19. Maryland	16	1.2
20. Massachusetts*	4	.3
21. Michigan	46	3.4
22. Minnesota	8	.6
23. Mississippi	13	1.0
24. Missouri	52	3.9
25. Nebraska	12	.9
26. Nevada	7	.5
27. New Hampshire	12	.9
28. New Jersey	16	1.2
29. New Mexico	6	.4
30. New York	77	5.7
31. North Carolina	15	1.1
32. North Dakota	20	1.5
33. Ohio	54	4.0
34. Oklahoma**	90	6.7
35. Oregon	20	1.5
36. Pennsylvania	110	8.2
37. Rhode Island**	9	.7
38. South Carolina	10	.7
39. South Dakota*	1	.1
40. Tennessee	9	.7
41. Texas	79	5.9
42. Utah*	4	.3
43. Vermont	1	.1
44. Virginia*	8	.6
45. Washington	1	.1
46. West Virginia	4	.3
47. Wisconsin	59	4.4
48. Wyoming	3	.2
Total	1337	99.3

	Respondents	
	N	%
1. American Samoa**	1	.1
2. Guam**	2	.1
3. Northern Mariana Islands**	1	.1
4. Puerto Rico**	1	.1
5. U.S. Virgin Islands	4	.3
Total	9	.7

*Did not solicit respondents from state; state contact either denied request or stated there were no TCs in state

**Did not receive response from state or territory contact

Work Setting. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple responses for the question "Within what type of community setting is your school or district located?" The choices were: rural, suburban, and urban. All respondents answered this item: 49% reported a rural setting; 43% reported a suburban setting; and 26.7% reported an urban setting, indicating that some transition coordinators work in more than one type of community setting. More specifically, 7.6% (130) of participants chose both *suburban* and *rural* as their work setting. The percentage was 9.6% (102) among participants who chose both *urban* and *suburban*. Six percent (82) of participants chose both *urban* and *rural*; and 4.7% (63) participants chose all three options.

Education level. Respondents were asked to report the degrees they have attained. Two-thirds (904) of participants reported earning a Master's degree; however, only 3.5% of those with Master's degrees (47 respondents) reported that their degree was in transition. Bachelor's degrees were reported by 19.3% (260) of respondents; transition specialist degrees were reported by 9.6% (129) of respondents; 2.2% (30) reported having a Doctoral degree; and 1.7% (23) reported "other degree" (e.g., educational specialist, alternative bachelor certification, and endorsement specialties).

Transition-specific college courses. Respondents were asked to report how many transition-specific college courses they had taken throughout their college and professional careers. A description was included defining this item: "courses focusing specifically on transition, and not classes where transition content is embedded within a methods class." Half of the respondents reported taking at least one class (50.2%). Of those, 85.4% (577) reported taking between one and five courses, and 14.6% (99) reported taking between six and 10 courses. Table 8 provides a full description of reported college courses.

Table 8

Transition-Specific College Courses

Number of Courses	N	%
1. 0	670	49.8
2. 1	214	15.9
3. 2	157	11.7
4. 3	88	6.5
5. 4	66	4.9
6. 5	52	3.9
7. 6	30	2.2
8. 7	17	1.3
9. 8	10	0.7
10. 9	4	0.3
11. 10 or more	38	2.8
Total	1346	100.0

Professional development. Respondents were asked to report how many transition-specific professional development hours they had completed within the past two years. Examples of professional development hours included time spent at conferences, attending continuing education classes or inservice trainings, and completing online or face-to-face learning modules. Almost 30% (394) reported having completed a large number of hours (41-50); and approximately 26% (354) reported between 1-10 hours. Table 9 provides a full description of reported professional development hours.

Table 9

Transition-Specific Professional Development in Past Two Years

	N	%
1. 0 hours	63	4.7
2. 1-10 hours	354	26.3
3. 11-20 hours	224	16.6
4. 21-30 hours	176	13.1
5. 31-40 hours	135	10.0
6. 41-50 hours	394	29.3
Total	1346	100.0

Disability categories and program types. Respondents were asked what grade level of students they served; what type of school or program they served in as a transition coordinator; and what types of students with disabilities they served. For all of these items, multiple responses were allowed. Ninety percent (1,215) of respondents stated that they served students that were in high school (9^{th} – 12^{th} grade). Approximately 50% (696) stated that they served students in an 18-21 year old community or postsecondary program (past 12^{th} grade); 42.6% (573) reported serving students at the middle or junior high school level (6^{th} – 8^{th} grade); and 9.9% (133) reported serving other grade levels (e.g., elementary, preschool, or K-12). Over 40% (560) selected both *middle school* and *high school* as the grade levels of students they work with.

For the item "In what type of school or program do you serve as a transition coordinator/transition specialist?" the majority of respondents (72.9%) chose within a public school, with an additional 29.6% indicating district-wide services. Table 10 provides a full description of the types of schools or programs where transition coordinators served. Of the 72.9% (981) who served in a public school, 93.5% (917) stated that they worked in a regular high school; 33.7% (331) in a regular middle or junior high school; and 22.9% (225) in an alternative school. Generally, half of the respondents served students with disabilities in more than one type of school or program.

Table 10

Types of Schools or Programs

	N	%*
1. Public School	981	72.9
2. District-Wide	399	29.6
3. 18-21 Community or Postsecondary Program	222	16.5
4. Special School**	173	12.9
5. Other	147	10.9
6. Charter School	70	5.2
7. Private School	50	3.7
Total	2042	151.7

*Participants were allowed more than one choice
**Special school serving only students with disabilities

Respondents were also asked to describe the students they primarily served by identifying their disability types. This item allowed for multiple responses. Table 11 below provides the full description of the disability groups served. Almost all of the respondents reported serving students across all disability groups (81.4%). Intellectual/cognitive disabilities (31.6%), emotional and behavioral disabilities (30.5%), autism (30.5%), specific learning disabilities (28.7%), and physical disabilities/other health impaired (28.6%) were almost equally represented.

Table 11

Disability Groups Served

	N	%*
1. All disability groups	1096	81.4
2. Intellectual/cognitive disabilities	426	31.6
3. Emotional and behavioral disabilities	410	30.5
4. Autism	410	30.5
5. Specific learning disabilities	386	28.7
6. Physical disabilities/other health impaired	385	28.6
7. Severe and multiple disabilities	271	20.1
8. Sensory disorders (deaf and/or blind)	236	17.5
9. Other	31	2.3
Total	3651	271.2

*Participants were allowed more than one choice

Collaboration. Transition coordinators were asked whether they collaborated with teachers in middle schools regarding transition and/or worked directly with middle school students. Well over half, 64% (861), of transition coordinators stated that they did collaborate with the middle school level.

Teaching content. Transition coordinators were asked whether they taught at least one transition-related course or course content directly to students with disabilities and if so, how and what they taught. Over one-third, 36.3% (489) of respondents reported teaching transition content directly to students. Of these respondents, 65.6% (321) reported teaching a transition-focused course; 58.7% (287) reported teaching students by meeting individually with them; 41.5% (203) reported teaching a work study-focused course; 31.7% (155) reported team teaching or co-teaching; and 11.9% (58) reported teaching students directly in other ways (e.g., after-school programs or weekly group sessions). The numbers reported are totals across multiple items; and are greater than 100%. On average, transition coordinators reported directly teaching students using more than one method. Table 12 provides a description of participant responses.

Table 12

Direct Teaching Methods

	N	%*
1. Transition-focused course	321	65.6
2. Meeting individually with students	287	58.7
3. Work study-focused course	203	41.5
4. Team teach/co-teach	155	31.7
5. Other	58	11.9
Total	1024	209.4

*Participants were allowed more than one choice

Among those that indicated teaching course content to students, nine different areas of transition content were reported. These areas are summarized in Table 13. The content reported most often were career awareness/career exploration (83.2%) and work-related behaviors and skills (82.0%). Over half of respondents reported teaching self-advocacy/self-determination skills (68.9%), independent living skills (57.1%), and community participation (55.6%). Less than one-third reported teaching academic/general core content classes (28.4%), study skills classes (28.2%), and inclusion, social relationships, and sexuality (26.8%). Other classes taught (6.7%) included: post-secondary options, home and family relationships, online learning skills, financial literacy, and driver's education. On average, transition coordinators reported teaching more than four different content areas to students with disabilities as part of their responsibilities.

Table 13

Content Areas Taught

	N	%*
1. Career awareness/career exploration	407	83.2
2. Work-related behaviors and skills	401	82.0
3. Self-advocacy/self-determination skills	337	68.9
4. Independent living skills	279	57.1
5. Community participation, including transportation, recreation, and leisure	272	55.6
6. Academic/general core content classes	139	28.4
7. Study skills classes	138	28.2
8. Inclusion, social relationships, and sexuality	131	26.8
9. Other	33	6.7
Total	2137	437.0

*Participants were allowed more than one choice

In summary, transition coordinators are employed either full-time or part-time almost equally across states, with slightly more being employed full-time. On average, both full-time and part-time transition coordinators have worked for about seven years as a transition coordinator and have taken between one to two college courses in transition. Half of respondents reported having taken no transition-specific college courses. Two-thirds of respondents reported having earned a Master's degree, most of which were full-time transition coordinators; however, the overall number who have completed specialized graduate work is small. Both groups of transition coordinators collaborate with middle schools at approximately the same rate (63-65%). Full-time transition coordinators are likely to teach transition courses directly to students and many teach in a variety of ways, including teaching stand-alone courses and meeting individually with students.

The research questions provide a means to determine whether the TCS was found to be a valid and reliable instrument. Descriptions of the evidence obtained to answer the research questions is described below.

Research Question 1: Is There Evidence of Validity in the *Transition Coordinators Survey*?

Validity of the *Transition Coordinators Survey* was addressed at various stages throughout its development. First, an exhaustive and comprehensive literature review was conducted. This included identifying scholarly articles that specifically addressed competencies for transition coordinators. Second, a focus group review of the survey was held with transition coordinators from across the country. Third, a review of the competencies was conducted with various national experts in the field of secondary special education and transition. A more detailed description of all of these steps is found in Chapter Three.

To establish evidence of validity, a review of transition coordinator competencies as set forth by the Council for Exceptional Children and the Division on Career Development and Transition was conducted. In addition, an in-depth review of the literature was completed, which yielded 15 usable articles. A series of researcher agreement checks were held as articles were added to a master matrix. The checks were held with a team of the same three researchers throughout the entire matrix development process and a consistent method was used in which all transition competencies found in the articles were compiled into a useable framework. Researchers had 100% agreement before an item was placed, moved, or deleted from the matrix at any point in its development.

Once the survey draft was completed and finalized, a focus group with 13 transition coordinators from around the country was held. These transition coordinators were chosen due to their involvement in the field of secondary special education and transition and their geographic location across the United States. They were identified from a pool of graduates of a national transition certificate program.

A team of national experts with interest and research expertise in the field of secondary special education and transition were selected to provide an external review. After the survey

was revised based on focus group feedback, the team of seven national experts was e-mailed a copy of the survey and a face-to-face meeting was arranged. At each phase of the survey development, feedback was evaluated and incorporated into the revised version of the survey to improve content and clarity.

The development of the TCS instrument included a multi-step process, beginning with a thorough literature review and conducting focus groups with transition coordinators to identify their daily job responsibilities. This enabled the creation of a measure that accurately reflects both the literature regarding transition coordinator competencies as well as what transition coordinators report they are actually doing. In addition, the survey items were precisely defined and clearly labeled to avoid confusion (Salant & Dillman, 1994). Items were constructed using validated item-writing rules for scales, including being clearly labeled, being written logically, and using appropriate vocabulary (Fowler, 1995; Frey, Petersen, Teramoto Pedrotti, & Peyton, 2005).

Generalizability. Due to the intensive recruitment efforts to cast as wide a net as possible and the specific steps taken in the development of the instrument, it is expected that the TCS is generalizable to transition coordinators across the United States. The framework for the survey was based upon the well-known standards from two national organizations (e.g., CEC and DCDT). The survey successfully captured data from participants in 48 states and 5 U.S. territories. By following the procedures outlined for ensuring validity, it can be concluded that this new instrument accurately reflects what it purports to measure and is nationally representative of the major regions of the United States.

Research Question 2: Is There Evidence of Reliability in the *Transition Coordinators Survey*?

Reliability of the *Transition Coordinators Survey* was addressed by following methods to develop a new instrument, such as conducting an item reliability analysis and reporting Cronbach's alpha. These steps are detailed in Chapter Three. The internal consistency reliability for the entire instrument was excellent ($\propto = .964$), and the internal consistency reliabilities estimates of the subdomains ranged from .827 to .958, indicating that responses to all subscales exhibited moderate to high reliability.

Table 14

Domain Reliabilities ($\propto$)

	Preparation	Performance
1. Interagency Collaboration	.944	.958
2. Family Collaboration	.923	.938
3. Career Development	.920	.929
4. Assessment	.917	.935
5. Leadership and Policy	.912	.930
6. Community-Referenced Curriculum and Programs	.910	.926
7. Transition Planning	.874	.901
8. Secondary Academic Programs	.827	.869

Summary

In summary, the *Transition Coordinators Survey* (TCS) was found to be a valid and reliable instrument. The instrument may be used in future research in the field of secondary special education and transition. It provides the field with new information about what transition coordinators are doing, how competent they feel, and how prepared they are to perform specific and necessary transition activities. The TCS gauges transition coordinators' level of preparedness to plan and deliver transition services and has the potential to impact the field in several ways, most importantly to help improve postschool outcomes for students with disabilities.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to create a valid and reliable instrument for the field of secondary special education and transition by developing and validating the *Transition Coordinators Survey*. The study used descriptive, scaling, and statistical methods to establish validity and reliability. This chapter discusses the summary of findings, limitations of the current study, future research potential, and implications for transition coordinator professional development.

Summary of Findings

The findings from this study support the claim that the *Transition Coordinators Survey* is a valid and reliable instrument, answering the two research questions of the study: (a) Is there evidence of validity in the *Transition Coordinators Survey*? and (b) Is there evidence of reliability in the *Transition Coordinators Survey*? This section will review different types of validity and reliability evidence, and provide an argument that the *Transition Coordinators Survey* is valid and reliable.

Validity. Two types of validity evidence were used in the development of the instrument: construct and content. Construct validity deals with the theoretical definition of what is being measured. Content validity establishes whether the items on the survey are a fair representation of the items that should be on the survey.

Construct validity. The *Transition Coordinators Survey* was carefully designed to align with the responsibilities of transition coordinators. The focus groups with currently employed transition coordinators helped the research team to ensure construct validity by critiquing the look and feel of the survey and offering suggestions for improvement. The focus group participants gave valuable feedback on whether the items were related to their current job

responsibilities or not. They also provided feedback on the wording of items, specifically to clarify the intent of certain statements. The theoretical base behind the study is detailed in Chapter Two and more detail regarding the methods used to build the measure is found in Chapter Three.

Content validity. The research team took into account the research and literature focused on transition competencies and merged the information into a usable format which was validated by national experts. In this study, it was established that the national professional organizations Council for Exceptional Children and its Division on Career Development and Transition have produced well-recognized and validated standards for transition coordinators. Their lists of competencies were chosen as a starting point for the matrix. The knowledge and skills included in the standards serve as a guide for teacher preparation and specifically transition services. The development of the *Transition Coordinators Survey* was built using those standards as a framework.

Fifteen articles were selected for inclusion in the matrix development process that addressed secondary special education and transition competencies, evidence-based practices, teacher surveys, and predictors of postschool success. The *Transition Coordinators Survey* includes items organized into domains confirmed by the research and expert review as essential to secondary special education and transition. Chapter Two gives a detailed account of the literature reviewed for the foundation of the TCS and Chapter Three details the methods used to synthesize the literature into a useable survey.

Reliability. Reliability seeks to ensure the consistency and dependability of a measure. The coefficient alpha (or Cronbach's alpha) assesses consistency in scores across items and ranges between 0 and 1 with 1 being perfect reliability. The Cronbach's alpha (α) is reported as

.964 for the *Transition Coordinators Survey*. Chapter Four includes a detailed description of each domain's reliability in both the preparation and performance subdomains.

A reliability analysis of the items from the two subscales (level of preparedness and performance) in each of the eight domains was conducted to determine which competency items were redundant, overlapped with other items, or failed to contribute to a factor. In order to allow for the possible deletion of items following the analysis, more items than were needed for each domain were developed and included in the instrument. On average, each domain had about eight items, ranging from six to 11 per domain. After completing the item reliability analysis it was found that the reliability of the instrument would not improve by deleting any item, thus no items were deleted from the survey.

Other Findings

Overall, transition coordinators who work full-time reported similar demographics to those who reported working part-time. Generally, they have been working for the same amount of years as transition coordinators; have taken the same amount of transition-specific college courses; have collaborated with middle schools; and have taught transition courses directly to students. Interesting findings include: (a) the large percentage of transition coordinators that reported working with middle schools; (b) the small percentage of transition-specific college courses taken by transition coordinators; and (c) the percentage of transition coordinators who teach courses to students with disabilities and the content they teach. Starting transition practices with young students in middle school is incredibly valuable for their development and allows students more time and flexibility in finding a good fit for their future (Weidenthal & Kochhar-Bryant, 2007). In addition to being a best practice, allowing students the opportunity to start transition as early as possible may reduce the drop-out rates (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004) and provide them with a chance to develop their identity, including helping understand themselves

and how their disabilities affect their lives (Kochhar, West, & Taymans, 2000). It is encouraging to see such a high percentage of transition coordinators across the nation collaborate with middle schools.

Unfortunately, almost half of transition coordinators reported never having taken a transition-specific college course. This raises many questions regarding their training, job preparation, certification, and core competency knowledge. Much knowledge is gained when transition coordinators are learning in college classroom settings, including learning core competency skills but also skills related to leadership, collaboration, and effective communication strategies (Morningstar, Kim, and Clark, 2008). Having a solid foundation and understanding of a career could help shape new transition coordinators' outlook and investment in the field of secondary special education and transition. In universities, future teachers and transition coordinators are given opportunities to practice new knowledge and create a skill base before putting it to direct use with students with disabilities, such as in practicas and internships (Flexer & Baer, 2005; Qazi, Rawat, & Thomas, 2012), and have more opportunities to make connections and become involved with community agencies and potential employers. Without this form of job preparation, transition coordinators must learn while already on the job, potentially adding stress and urgency instead of a complete understanding of the issues and attention to tasks.

About one-third of transition coordinators reported teaching transition-related material directly to students. Historically, transition coordinators have often coordinated work-study programs, but it is still interesting to note how many transition coordinators teach content directly to students. Two-thirds of transition coordinators reported teaching a transition-focused course directly to students, and almost 60% reported meeting individually with students as one of

their teaching methods. About 40% reported teaching a work study-focused course, and about 30% reported team teaching or co-teaching. The most common content areas taught were career awareness/career exploration and work-related behaviors and skills. Transition coordinators also noted that they taught students skill areas such as: (a) self-advocacy and self-determination; (b) independent living; (c) community participation; (d) academic and general core content classes; (e) study skills classes; and (f) inclusion, social relationships, and sexuality.

It is also worth comparing the results of the *Transition Coordinators Survey* and the Secondary Teachers Transition Survey (STTS), completed in 2005 (Benitez & Morningstar, 2005). Keep in mind that the STTS study involved secondary special education teachers and was not exclusive to transition coordinators. The average number of transition-specific college courses completed by secondary special education teachers was approximately one per teacher, whereas the *Transition Coordinators Survey* reported almost two classes (1.69) for full-time transition coordinators and 1.4 for part-time transition coordinators. The STTS reports the average number of years working as a teacher as 16.6, whereas the *Transition Coordinators Survey* reports the average number of years working as a transition coordinator as seven. Overall, it seems that transition coordinators are taking more college classes than previously, although not significantly more.

The *Transition Coordinators Survey* asked respondents how many years they have been a transition coordinator, not how many years they have worked in secondary special education; and even though the average years working appears to have declined, perhaps transition coordinators have worked for several years as classroom teachers and then changed into the transition coordinator role. Historically, the position of transition coordinator emerged in the late 1990's after the field of transition received much attention due to "transition" being formally defined in the 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which in turn prompted CEC's

Division on Career Development to form their own definition. The 1990's also brought much attention to special education and transition due to the passing of The Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, The Rehabilitation Act in 1992, and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act in 1994 among others. A burst of articles and books exploring topics such as interagency collaboration, best practices, and self-determination started appearing around this time (Halpern, n.d.). After a decade of literature and research, the Division on Career Development and Transition (2000) produced their Transition Specialist Competencies Fact Sheet, a list of validated transition coordinator competences based on effective transition practices.

Limitations

Due to the nature of the research questions, several limitations of the study were present. First, certain analyses were not conducted, such as a confirmatory factor analysis. By conducting a factor analysis, researchers attempt to decrease overlap by reducing the number of variables needed (Green & Salkind, 2008). A confirmatory factor analysis allows researchers to test whether the data fits into a hypothesized model or construct (Preedy & Watson, 2009). Certainly this and many other types of data analysis will be done in the future with this dataset; however, that was not an intention of this particular study.

Another limitation of the study was the inability to accurately track how many transition coordinators were sent information about the survey, and thus calculate an accurate response rate. Survey information was sent to transition coordinators in various ways, including: (a) direct emails; (b) electronic mailing lists; (c) through district transition coordinators; (d) forwarded from colleagues; (e) shared in person at professional conferences; and (f) posted on websites. To calculate an accurate response rate, researchers would have needed accurate information from state and local contacts about exactly how many people they were giving information to, and be able to trace this information back to the actual survey users.

Third, the survey required participants to choose an answer for each item before proceeding to the next section. It did not allow transition coordinators to provide written feedback or include descriptions of additional competencies that they perform in their job duties. Although steps were taken to include all competencies found in the literature, this may have limited the way individual transition coordinators were able to describe their roles and responsibilities. In addition, this is a self-report study. Participants were asked to generate answers based on their own perceptions of their preparedness and performance levels on competency items, which may not be an accurate reflection of their actual preparedness and performance levels.

Fourth, due to the inclusion of several multiple response items, the researchers were unable to compare the disability categories and program types served by transition coordinators. Subsequent studies should construct responses that will allow for cross-tabulation. This would have been particularly relevant to better understand how transition coordinators taught content. States could use this information to better fine-tune their transition programs and improve needed areas.

Finally, nonresponse bias could have been a factor. There is no way to know the views of those transition coordinators who did not complete the survey. Additionally, there were a small number of individuals who attempted the survey but did not agree to participate at the beginning and did not proceed through to complete the survey.

Future Research

Although increasing from years past, there are still a limited number of articles that have been published specifically on transition coordinator competencies. It would continue to benefit the field if more research is conducted (Morgan, Callow-Heusser, Horrocks, Hoffmann, & Kupferman, 2013; Morningstar and Benitez, 2013; Plotner, Trach, & Strauser, 2012). This study

created the *Transition Coordinators Survey*, a potentially valuable tool which can be used to expand the current transition coordinator research base and increase awareness of the role transition coordinators play.

It may be useful to investigate whether there are different roles and responsibilities that transition coordinators fulfill specific to their state, district, or region of the country. In doing so, adding a third section to the survey with open-ended qualitative question prompts may be valuable for states or districts. Additionally, it may be worthwhile for states to administer the *Transition Coordinators Survey* at the beginning of a transition coordinator's employment to determine training needs, and again at a set time (i.e., after 3 years employment) to determine if transition coordinators feel more prepared to perform activities and/or rate themselves higher on performing activities.

Given that such a high percentage of transition coordinators were involved with middle schools, a follow-up study investigating the type of activities transition coordinators complete within middle schools would be appealing. Around 20% of students with disabilities who left school during the 2010-2011 school year dropped out (Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, 2013). Transition coordinators are a potential bridge to high school for students with disabilities with their involvement at middle schools. Starting transition-related activities for all students early will potentially impact the dropout rate of students with disabilities and allow more time to plan for the comprehensive activities that lead to a student's successful transition into adulthood (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004; Weidenthal & Kochhar-Bryant, 2007).

Implications for professional development and training. Transition coordinators working with students with disabilities should be concerned about implementing strategies and practices into their daily routine that have proven to be effective. Being responsible for researching the best information available will help not only those students with disabilities they

have direct contact with but also the families, schools, and communities involved with a student's transition.

Professional development hours reported by transition coordinators were quite high, with over a quarter (26%) of respondents receiving between 1-10 hours and 29% between 41-50 hours of training in the past two years. The majority (40%) were spread across 11-40 hours of training. Less than 5% (63) of respondents reported having zero hours of transition-specific professional development. The data strongly suggests that transition coordinators are receiving their training through professional development, i.e., on-the-job training at the inservice level. What is less clear is how transition coordinators learn about best practices and evidence-based practices other than professional development hours, due to the low percentage who reported taking transition-specific college courses.

On average, full-time transition coordinators reported taking almost two (1.69) transition-specific college courses and part-time transition coordinators reported taking 1.4. This low average could be an indicator of colleges and universities not offering transition-specific programs or courses as part of personnel preparation programs to future teachers. When transition coordinators do not have the most up-to-date information on effective practices, their transition programs may risk losing effectiveness and relevancy.

Additionally, 4.5% (35) of full-time transition coordinators reported having a Master's degree in transition and 2.1% (12) of part-time transition coordinators reported the same. With a sample size of 1,346 transition coordinators, having only 47 (3.49%) total respondents with a Master's degree specialization in transition brings to light additional concerns. These low numbers could be indicators of a lack of Master's degree programs available nationwide or a lack of funding for transition coordinators to engage in available programs.

Conclusions

The findings from the *Transition Coordinators Survey* help describe the current status of transition coordinators in the field of secondary special education and transition. Overall, transition coordinators are slightly more educated than secondary special education teachers in previous studies (Benitez & Morningstar, 2005) and are participating in high numbers of professional development inservice trainings. In addition, transition coordinators teach a variety of transition-related subject matter directly to students. Most transition coordinators work with students from all disability groups that attend public high schools or 18-21 year old programs. They primarily teach students skills in the areas of career awareness/career exploration, work-related behaviors, and self-advocacy/self-determination through transition-focused courses, meeting individually with students, and work-focused courses.

Responses from 48 states and five U.S. territories were included, thus lending to the belief that the *Transition Coordinators Survey* may be generalizable across the U.S. in various types of community settings: urban, rural, and suburban. Finally, the *Transition Coordinators Survey* was shown to be both valid and reliable in its development, testing, and data collection. The survey measures what it claims to measure: transition coordinator competencies. Extensive research was done before the development of the survey to ensure the research team had access to all research regarding transition coordinator competencies, which was used as the framework for the *Transition Coordinators Survey* instrument. Multiple steps were taken to ensure various stakeholders were able to add input into its development, such as conducting focus groups with transition coordinators and holding a face-to-face meeting with national experts. The eight domains of the *Transition Coordinators Survey* were proven to have a very high reliability rating ($\alpha = .964$) and as such it was shown to be a consistent and dependable measure.

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Appendix A

Participating States and Territories

States

	Email list provided and survey information sent directly to participants	Survey information sent out via electronic mailing list by state contact	Survey information distributed in another way (e.g., posted on website, wiki, or shared in person)
1. Alabama			X Forwarded to SPED directors
2. Alaska		X	
3. Arizona	X		
4. Arkansas	X		
5. California	X		
6. Colorado		X	
7. Connecticut		X	
8. Delaware			X Distributed at state meeting
9. Florida			X Found list of TCs online
10. Georgia			X Forwarded to SPED directors
11. Hawaii		X	
12. Idaho	X		
13. Illinois		X	
14. Indiana	X		
15. Iowa**			
16. Kansas	X		
17. Kentucky	X		
18. Louisiana			X Posted on website
19. Maryland	X		
20. Massachusetts*			
21. Michigan			X Found list of TCs online
22. Minnesota		X	
23. Mississippi			X Forwarded to SPED directors

24. Missouri	X		
25. Nebraska	X		
26. Nevada			X Forwarded to SPED directors
27. New Hampshire	X		
28. New Jersey			X Distributed to informal organization
29. New Mexico			X Found list of TCs online
30. New York	X		
31. North Carolina		X	
32. North Dakota		X	
33. Ohio			X Forwarded to SPED directors
34. Oklahoma**			
35. Oregon			X Found list of TCs online
36. Pennsylvania	X		
37. Rhode Island**			
38. South Carolina	X		
39. South Dakota*			
40. Tennessee		X	
41. Texas		X	X Forwarded to SPED directors
42. Utah*			
43. Vermont			X Posted on wiki
44. Virginia*			
45. Washington			X Distributed at state meeting
46. West Virginia		X	
47. Wisconsin	X		
48. Wyoming	X		
Total	16	11	15

*Did not solicit respondents from this state/territory; contact either denied request or stated there were no TCs

**Did not receive response from state contact

Territories

	Email list of transition coordinators given and survey information sent directly to TCs	Survey information sent out via electronic mailing list by state contact	Survey information distributed in another way (e.g., posted on website, wiki, or shared in person)
1. American Samoa**			
2. Guam**			
3. Northern Mariana Islands**			
4. Puerto Rico**			
5. U.S. Virgin Islands	X		
Total	1	0	0

*Did not solicit respondents from this state/territory; contact either denied request or stated there were no TCs

**Did not receive response from state contact

Appendix B

Sample of Matrix Organization

Leadership and Policy Domain

CEC/DCDT Competencies	STTS, Benitez & MM, 2005	MM, Kim, & Clark, 2008 - KU Transition Competency Survey	Noonan, MM, Gaumer Erickson, 2008 + Noonan, 2004 (dissertation)	Kim & MM, 2007
6m. Skills Assure individual, family, and agency participation in transition planning and implementation (TS6S9) 2o. Knowledge Strategies for involving families and individuals with exceptional learning needs in transition planning and evaluation (TS2K4) Collaborate with team members to plan transition to adulthood that encourages full community participation Standard 10: Collaboration (IGC10S4) Note: Families of individual students	Collaborate with families in transition goal setting (Collaboration)	Apply knowledge of family systems perspective to transition planning and promote collaboration with families	Continue to assist families even after student has exited school services	Identify specific parent and family roles in the educational process

Strategies to improve planning with families	Plan with team members for transition that encourages full participation in the community (Collaboration)	Cultivate cooperative and collaborative relationships with students, families, school and non-school personnel	(Focused on building relationships associated providing transition services)	Involve parents and families in setting transition goals and monitoring progress
6 sources, 31 items	Encourage parent participation in order to foster transition outcomes that support families' cultures (Additional competencies)		Develop relationships through shared problem solving and goal setting, joint training, and high levels of effort from all sides	Accept parents and families as full partners in the planning and decision-making process
				Have knowledge of school resources for supporting CLD families (e.g., interpreters, written documents in home language)
				Have knowledge of school and transition resources for support families
				Demonstrate skills for cross-cultural communication appropriately
				Involve parents and families in school and community advisory and planning groups for transition issues and services

				Respect parents/families' strengths and efforts during transition
				Foster respectful and beneficial relationships with parents and families
				Respect others' culture, language, values, and traditions
				Understand your own values and how they affect people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds
				Accept that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others
				Recognize how variations in cultural beliefs, traditions, and values affect your relationship with CLD families

Appendix C

Articles Included in Framework and Review

Benitez, D., & Morningstar, M. E. (2005). *A multistate study of special education teachers' perceptions of their own transition competencies*. Paper presented at the International Conference of the Division of Career Development and Transition, Albuquerque, N.M.

Betz, C. L., & Redcay, G. (2005). Dimensions of the transition service coordinator role. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing, 10*(2), 49-59.

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Division on Career Development and Transition (2000). *Transition specialist competencies fact sheet*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Kim, K., & Morningstar, M. E. (2007). Enhancing secondary special education teachers' knowledge and competencies in working with culturally and linguistically diverse families through online training. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 30*(2), 116-128.

Kohler, P. D. (1996). *Taxonomy for transition programming*. Champaign: University of Illinois.

Knott, L., & Asselin, S. B. (1999). Transition competencies: Perception of secondary special education teachers. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 22*(1), 55-65.

Li, J. (2004). *Interagency collaboration in transition practice: An initial model* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3130531)

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Morningstar, M. E., Kim, K., & Clark, G. M. (2008). Evaluating a transition personnel preparation program: Identifying transition competencies of practitioners. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 31*(1), 47-58.

Noonan, P., Morningstar, M. E., & Gaumer Erickson, A. (2008). Improving interagency collaboration: Effective strategies used by high-performing local districts and communities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 31*(3), 132-143.

Plotner, A. J. (2009). *Vocational rehabilitation professionals' identified transition competencies: Importance, frequency, and preparedness* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3392435)

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Test, D. W., Mazzotti, V. L., Mustian, A. L., Fowler, C. H., Koertering, L., & Kohler, P. (2009). Evidence-based secondary transition predictors for improving postschool outcomes for students with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 32*(3), 160-181.

Test, D. W., Scroggings, L. C., & Toms, O. M. (2011). *What transition specialists need to know*. Charlotte: University of North Carolina Charlotte, National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center.

Appendix D

Articles Rejected from Review

Anderson, D., Kleinhammer-Tramill, P. J., Morningstar, M. E., Lehmann, J., Bassett, D., Kohler, P., . . . Wehmeyer, M. (2003). What's happening in personnel preparation in transition? A national survey. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 26*(2), 145-160.

Rejection reason: Research focused on teacher preparation

Blalock, G., Kochhar-Bryant, C. A., Test, D. W., Kohler, P., White, W., Lehmann, J., . . . Patton, J. (2003). The need for comprehensive personnel preparation in transition and career development: A position statement of the Division on Career Development and Transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 26*(2), 207-226.

Rejection reason: Position paper, not research-based

Cobb, R. B., & Alwell, M. (2009). Transition planning/coordinating interventions for youth with disabilities: A systematic review. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 32*(2), 70-81.

Rejection reason: Included in Test et al, 2009

Dutta, A., Schiro-Geist, C., & Kundu, M. M. (2009). Coordination of postsecondary transition services for students with disabilities. *Journal of Rehabilitation, 75*(1), 10-17.

Rejection reason: Research focused on postsecondary university students; did not link to K12 and no specific competencies listed

Flexer, R. W., & Baer, R. M. (2005). Description and evaluation of a university-based transition endorsement program. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 28*(2), 80-91.

Rejection reason: Research focused on university endorsement program

Jackson, T. L. (2003*). Secondary transition coordinators at the state level*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

Rejection reason: Research focused on state-level personnel

Kenney, S. L., Hammitte, D. J., Rakestraw, J., & LaMontagne, M. J. (2000). Special education and the P-16 initiative: Addressing CEC competencies through portfolio development and assessment. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 23*(2), 93-108.

Rejection reason: Research focused on teacher preparation; no specific competencies reported

Kleinhammer-Tramill, P. J., Geiger, W. L., & Morningstar, M. E. (2003). Policy contexts for transition personnel preparation: An analysis of transition-related credentials, standards, and course requirements in state certification and licensure policies. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 26*(2), 185-206.

Rejection reason: Research focused on state licensure requirements

Kohler, P. D., & Greene, G. (2004). Strategies for integrating transition-related competencies into teacher education. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 27*(2), 146-162.

Rejection reason: Competencies listed are from DCDT fact sheet and already included in matrix

Little, M. E., & Crawford, P. A. (2002). Collaboration among educators for true innovative programming. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, *25*(3), 320-324.

Rejection reason: Research focused on teacher preparation

Lubbers, J. H., Repetto, J. B., & McGorray, S. P. (2008). Perceptions of transition barriers, practices, and solutions in Florida. *Remedial and Special Education, 29*(5), 280-292.

Rejection reason: Nothing specific to transition coordinators except listed as a barrier (re: lack of resources to hire transition coordinators)

Morningstar, M. E., & Clark, G. M. (2003). The status of personnel preparation for transition education and services: What is the critical content? How can it be offered? *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 26*(2), 227-237.

Rejection reason: Opinion paper, not research-based

Spooner, F., Algozzine, B., Wood, C. L., & Hicks, S. C. (2010). What we know and need to know about teacher education and special education. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 33*(1), 44-54.

Rejection reason: No competencies listed and nothing on transition

Thoma, C. A. (2005). Transition planning that facilitates student self-determination. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 16*(4), 321-326.

Rejection reason: Opinion paper, not research-based

Titus-Schmahl, K. (2010). *Special education teachers' perceptions of transition competencies and transition training* (Master's thesis). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 1485302)

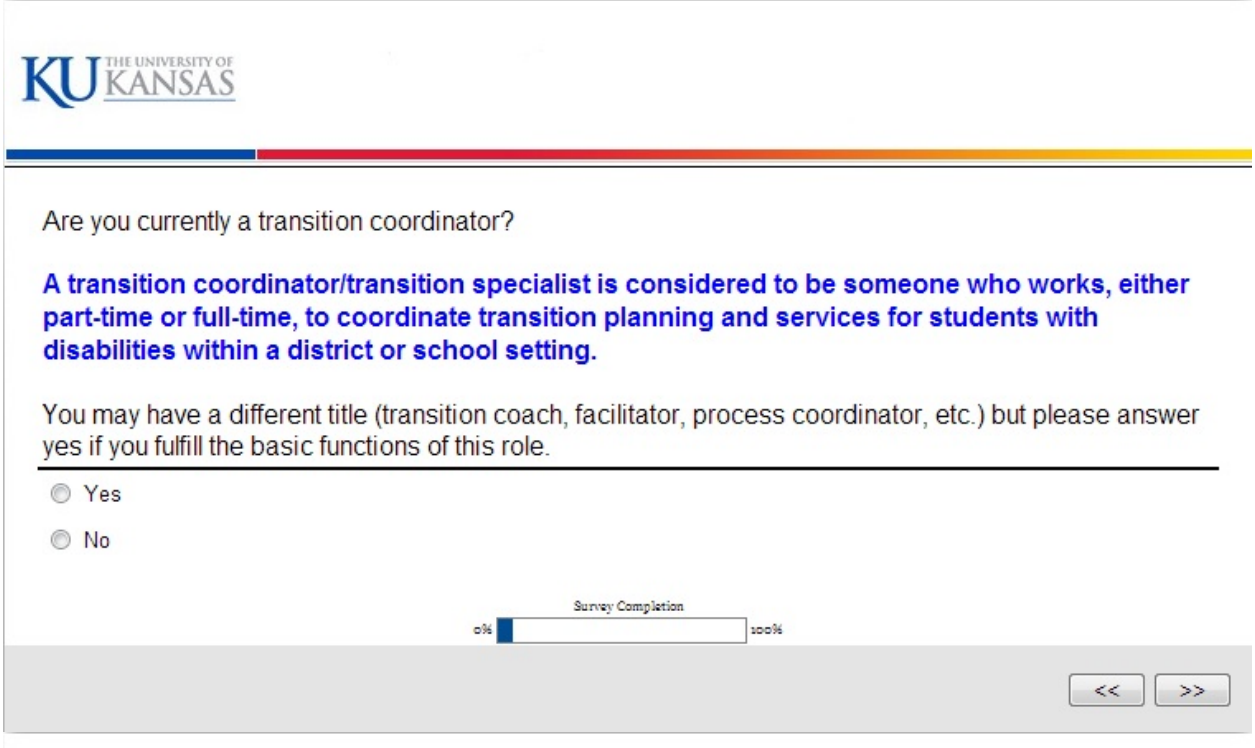
Rejection reason: Replication study of Benitez & Morningstar; information was redundant

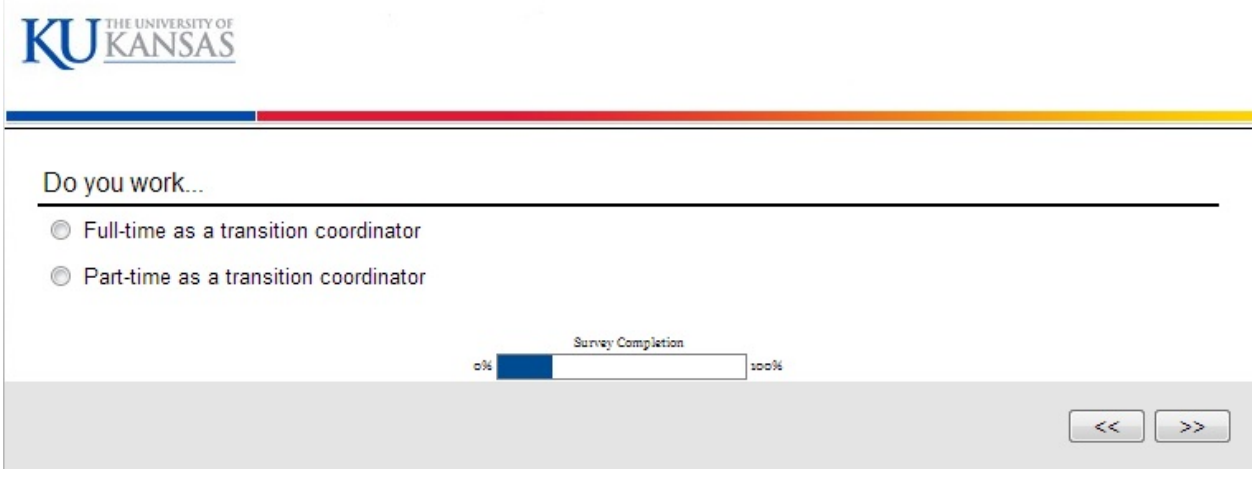
Wandry, D. L., Webb, K. W., Williams, J. M., Bassett, D. S., Asselin, S. B., & Hutchinson, S. R. (2008). Teacher candidates' perceptions of barriers to effective transition programming. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 31*(1), 14-25.

Rejection reason: Research focused on teacher preparation

Appendix E

The *Transition Coordinators Survey* (TCS)





KU THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

What is your official job title?

- Transition Coordinator
- Transition Facilitator
- Transition Specialist
- Transition Coach
- Process/Transition Coordinator
- Vocational Coordinator/Specialist/Counselor
- Other

How many years have you been a **transition coordinator/transition specialist**?

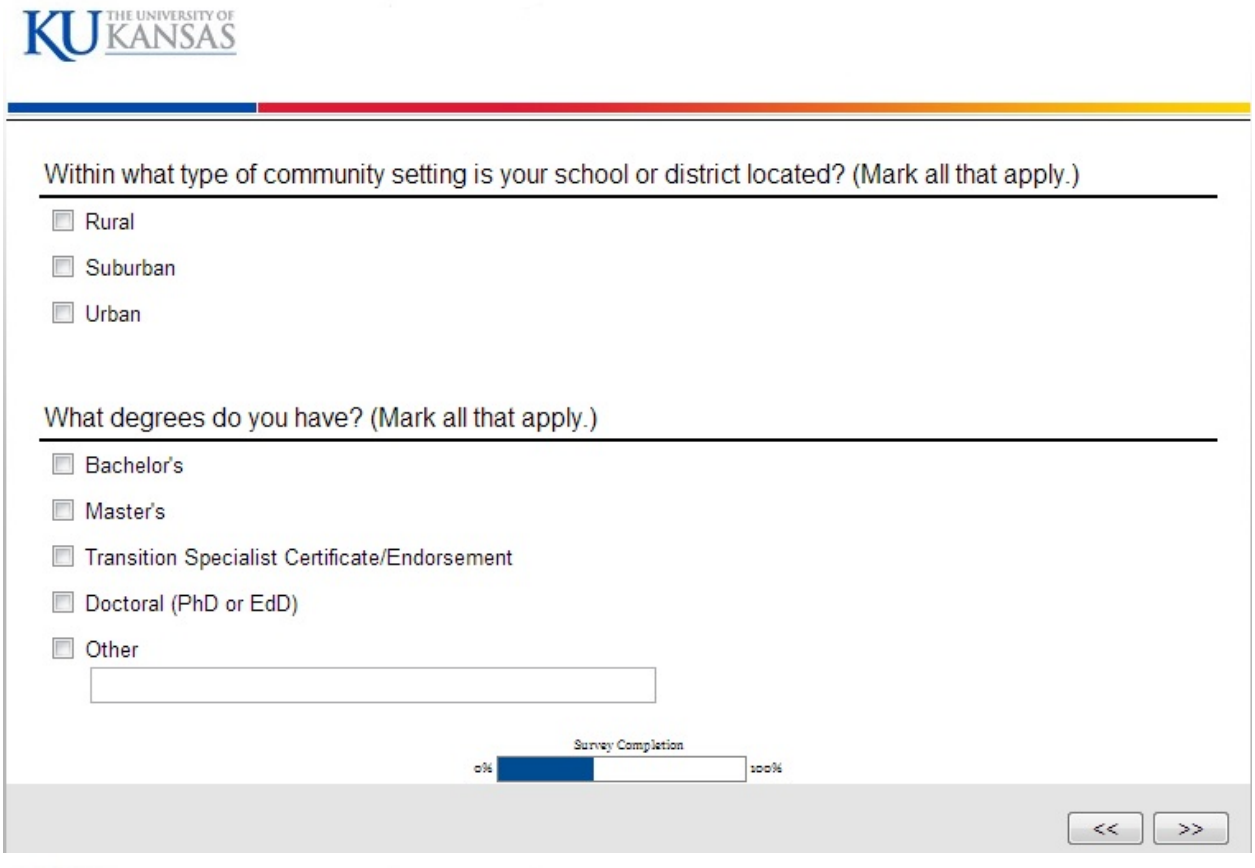
- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years
- 6 years
- 7 years
- 8 years
- 9 years
- 10 years
- 11 years
- 12 years
- 13 years
- 14 years
- 15 or more years

In what state do you work?

Survey Completion

0% 100%

<< >>



KU THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

Within what type of community setting is your school or district located? (Mark all that apply.)

- [ ] Rural
- [ ] Suburban
- [ ] Urban

What degrees do you have? (Mark all that apply.)

- [ ] Bachelor's
- [ ] Master's
- [ ] Transition Specialist Certificate/Endorsement
- [ ] Doctoral (PhD or EdD)
- [ ] Other

Survey Completion
0% 100%

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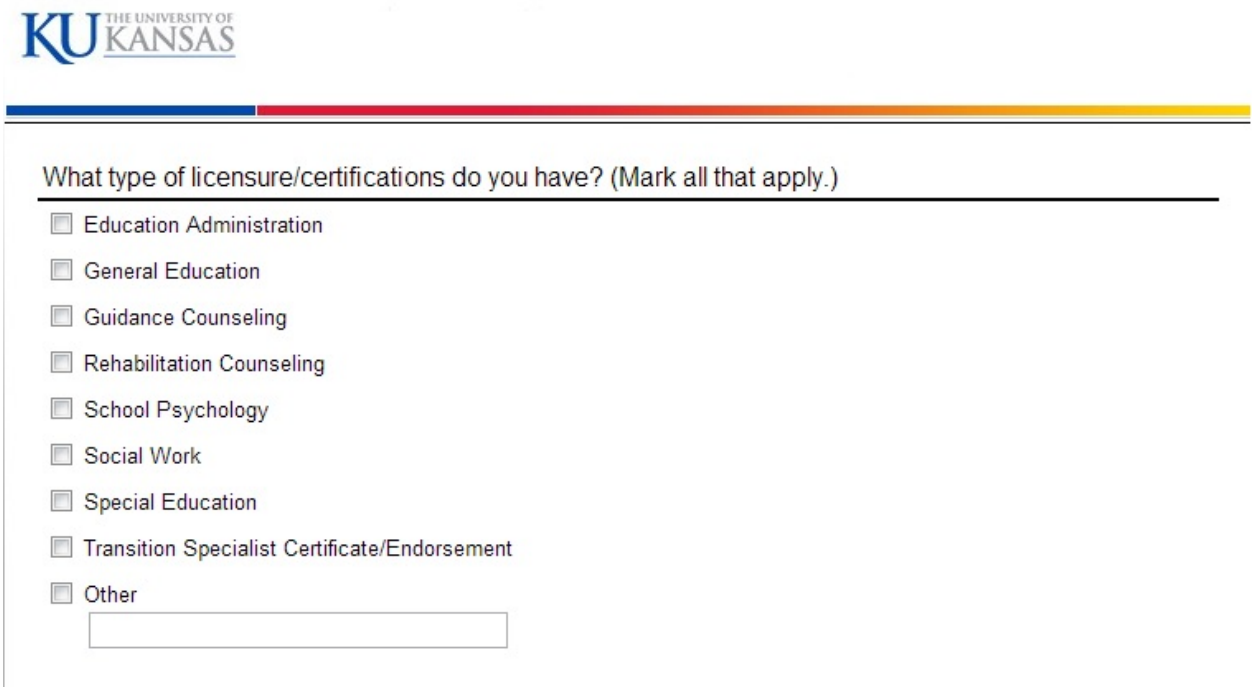


KU THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

What type of licensure/certifications do you have? (Mark all that apply.)

- [ ] Education Administration
- [ ] General Education
- [ ] Guidance Counseling
- [ ] Rehabilitation Counseling
- [ ] School Psychology
- [ ] Social Work
- [ ] Special Education
- [ ] Transition Specialist Certificate/Endorsement
- [ ] Other

How many **transition-specific college courses** have you taken?

Courses focusing specifically on transition, and not classes where transition content is embedded within a methods class.

- ○ 0 transition-specific college courses
- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5
- ○ 6
- ○ 7
- ○ 8
- ○ 9
- ○ 10 or more transition-specific college courses

Over the past 2 years, about how many hours of **transition-specific** professional development have you completed?

Inservice trainings, online or face-to-face learning modules, conferences, continuing education classes, etc.

What is the grade level of students with disabilities whom you serve? (Mark all that apply.)

- ☐ Middle school or junior high school (6th-8th grade)
- ☐ High school (9th-12th grade)
- ☐ 18-21 year old community or postsecondary program (Past 12th grade)
- ☐ Other

In what type of school or program do you serve as a transition coordinator/transition specialist? (Mark all that apply.)

- [ ] 18-21 year old community or postsecondary program (not in a school setting)
- [ ] Charter school
- [ ] District-wide
- [ ] Private school
- [ ] Public school
- [ ] Special school only serving students with disabilities
- [ ] Other

Survey Completion
0% 100%

<< >>

KU THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

What types of students with disabilities do you serve? (Mark all that apply.)

- [ ] Across all disability groups
- [ ] Autism
- [ ] Emotional and behavioral disabilities
- [ ] Intellectual/cognitive disabilities
- [ ] Physical disabilities/other health impaired
- [ ] Sensory disorders (deaf and/or blind)
- [ ] Severe and multiple disabilities
- [ ] Specific learning disabilities
- [ ] Other

I collaborate with teachers at the middle school level regarding transition and/or work directly with middle school students.

- Yes
- No

As part of my job as a transition coordinator I teach one or more transition-related courses/course content directly to students with disabilities.

- Yes
- No

Survey Completion

0% 100%

<< >>

If yes, please mark the following content areas you teach. (Mark all that apply.)

- [ ] Academic/general core content classes
- [ ] Career awareness/career exploration
- [ ] Community participation including transportation, recreation, and leisure
- [ ] Inclusion, social relationships, and sexuality
- [ ] Independent living skills
- [ ] Self-advocacy/self-determination skills
- [ ] Study skills classes
- [ ] Work-related behaviors and skills (i.e., job skills curricula, job application skills, etc.)
- [ ] Other

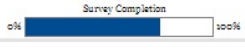
How do you teach these content areas? (Mark all that apply.)

- [ ] A transition-focused course
- [ ] A work study-focused course
- [ ] Meeting individually with students
- [ ] Team teach/co-teach
- [ ] Other

Domain 1 of 8

Instructions: The left column represents transition activities statements. ***In your role as a transition coordinator***, answer:
How Prepared you are to perform the activity
How Well do you perform the activity

	How **prepared** are you to perform the activity?					Please rate your performance on the following transition activities.					
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
1. Developing transition IEPs with measurable postsecondary goals based on the strengths, interests, preferences, and needs of students	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. Using planning strategies to facilitate input from team members during transition planning	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Ensuring adequate preparation for students to be involved in transition planning	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. Promoting active involvement of culturally and linguistically diverse families before, during, and after transition planning meetings	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
5. Coordinating transition planning meetings with stakeholders	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. Identifying future postsecondary service needs in order to coordinate with relevant postsecondary and community agencies	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. Including transition goals related to postsecondary education, employment, and independent living in the IEP	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. Checking IEPs for compliance with federal and state regulations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○



Domain 2 of 8

Instructions: The left column represents transition activities statements. ***In your role as a transition coordinator***, answer:
How Prepared you are to perform the activity
How Well do you perform the activity

	How **prepared** are you to perform the activity?					Please rate your performance on the following transition activities.					
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
9. Explaining transition assessment results to students and families	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. Applying transition assessment results to students' transition plans	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. Using a variety of assessment methods during transition planning	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. Using assessments to identify students' strengths, interests, andpreferences.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. Conducting assessments for critical transition outcomes (i.e., postsecondary education, employment, independent living)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
14. Modifying or adapting assessments when current measures are not applicable for a student	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. Matching interests, preferences and strengths of students with jobs or careers	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
16. Evaluating usefulness of current transition assessments	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
17. Coordinating assistive technology assessments for transition when needed for a student	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Survey Completion
0% 100%

Domain 3 of 8

Instructions: The left column represents transition activities statements. ***In your role as a transition coordinator***, answer:
How Prepared you are to perform the activity
How Well do you perform the activity

	How **prepared** are you to perform the activity?					Please rate your performance on the following transition activities.					
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
18. Considering the impact of transition on the family	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
19. Facilitating involvement of families in the transition planning process	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
20. Identifying specific family roles during transition planning	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
21. Identifying family needs related to transition	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
22. Using school resources for supporting culturally and linguistically diverse families	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

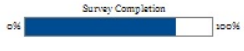
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
23. Developing relationships with families through shared problem-solving	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
24. Providing information to families about transition, community agencies, and post-school options	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
25. Providing training to parents/families about transition topics	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
26. Explaining the values and beliefs underlying transition to diverse families	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
27. Connecting with cultural organizations to ensure the involvement of diverse families	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Survey Completion
0% 100%

Domain 4 of 8

Instructions: The left column represents transition activities statements. ***In your role as a transition coordinator***, answer:
How Prepared you are to perform the activity
How Well do you perform the activity

	How **prepared** are you to perform the activity?					Please rate your performance on the following transition activities.					
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
28. Sharing resources with teachers on how to embed transition content within general academic courses	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
29. Aligning students' IEP goals with identified measurable postsecondary outcomes	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
30. Modifying transition programs based on current reform models used in my district or school	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
31. Planning for accommodations and modifications in postsecondary settings	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
32. Coordinating academic accommodations for students taking state assessments as needed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
33. Assisting students to self-advocate for accommodations within core academic courses	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○



Domain 5 of 8

Instructions: The left column represents transition activities statements. ***In your role as a transition coordinator***, answer:
How Prepared you are to perform the activity
How Well do you perform the activity

	How **prepared** are you to perform the activity?					Please rate your performance on the following transition activities.					
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
34. Providing teachers with instructional resources for independent living	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
35. Providing teachers with instructional resources addressing community participation (e.g., transportation, recreation, services)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
36. Providing teachers with instructional resources addressing healthy social relationships	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
37. Providing teachers with instructional resources addressing self-advocacy and self-determination	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
38. Supporting student self-advocacy and within the transition planning process	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
39. Collaborating with school and community programs to foster self-advocacy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Domain 6 of 8

Instructions: The left column represents transition activities statements. ***In your role as a transition coordinator***, answer:
How Prepared you are to perform the activity
How Well do you perform the activity

	How **prepared** are you to perform the activity?					Please rate your performance on the following transition activities.					
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
40. Responding to employment trends and needs in the community	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
41. Ensuring effective work placements based on student interests and strengths (i.e., student-directed job development)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
42. Providing teachers with resources on work-related behaviors and skills (e.g., job skills curricula, job application skills)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
43. Providing teachers with resources for career awareness & career exploration	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
44. Communicating regularly with employers, businesses, and work site personnel	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
45. Providing on-the-job support for students (e.g., modifying work environments)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
46. Collaborating with career/technical education programs to include students with disabilities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	◉
47. Developing **school-based** employment experiences and curricula (e.g., student-run businesses, inschool internships), as needed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
48. Coordinating **work-based** programs (e.g., work-study, paid work experiences, internships)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Survey Completion
0% 100%

Domain 7 of 8

Instructions: The left column represents transition activities statements. ***In your role as a transition coordinator***, answer:
How Prepared you are to perform the activity
How Well do you perform the activity

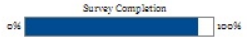
	How **prepared** are you to perform the activity?					Please rate your performance on the following transition activities.					
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
49. Serving as a liaison between families and community agencies	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
50. Learning about the range of community services and supports	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
51. Identifying the roles, capacities and constraints of community agencies	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
52. Developing strategies to collect, share, and use relevant data to identify community needs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
53. Facilitating student/family referral to community services	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
54. Coordinating interagency agreements between schools and outside agencies	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
55. Working with professionals from other disciplines, schools, and agencies	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
56. Problem-solving with agencies to address transition barriers	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
57. Participating in community-level transition teams (transition councils)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
58. Collaborating with agencies to share funding and staffing for transition services	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
59. Helping students develop natural support networks in the community	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Survey Completion
0% 100%

Domain 8 of 8

Instructions: The left column represents transition activities statements. ***In your role as a transition coordinator***, answer:
How Prepared you are to perform the activity
How Well do you perform the activity

	How **prepared** are you to perform the activity?					Please rate your performance on the following transition activities.					
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
60. Adhering to district, state, and federal transition requirements	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
61. Ensuring teachers implement federal and state policies related to transition	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
62. Disseminating transition resources to stakeholders (i.e., educators, service providers, employers)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
63. Training district professionals, community agencies, and transition stakeholders about transition	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
64. Advocating for transition program changes when needed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Very Prepared	Prepared	Neutral	Unprepared	Very Unprepared	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable (this is not a part of my job duties)
65. Engaging in individual student advocacy when needed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
66. Demonstrating professional ethics in role as a transition coordinator	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
67. Collecting post-school outcomes data for youth exiting school	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
68. Using outcomes data to improve transition programs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
69. Using evidence-based practices and research to develop transition programs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○



Appendix F

Information Statement

Transition Coordinators Survey

The Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

We are conducting this study to better understand the competencies of transition coordinators. This will entail your completion of a questionnaire. The questionnaire is expected to take *approximately* 20 minutes to complete.

The content of the questionnaires should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life. Although participation may not benefit you directly, we believe that the information obtained from this study will help us gain a better understanding of transition coordinator competencies. Your participation is solicited, although strictly voluntary. Your name or identifying information will not be associated in any way with the research findings. If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, please feel free to contact us by phone or mail.

Completion of the survey indicates your willingness to participate in this project and that you are over the age of eighteen. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385 or write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7563, email mdenning@ku.edu.

Sincerely,

Diana K. Björkman Wade, Principal Investigator
University of Kansas Dept. of Special Education
Joseph R. Pearson Hall
Lawrence, KS 66045
(785) 864-7098
dkwade@ku.edu

Mary E. Morningstar, Ph.D., Faculty Supervisor
University of Kansas Dept. of Special Education
Joseph R. Pearson Hall
Lawrence, KS 66045
(785) 864-0682
mmorningstar@ku.edu

Approved by the Human Subjects Committee University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus (HSCL). Approval expires one year from 10/2/2011. HSCL #19613